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Oscar time

THREE PAGES OF COVERAGE INSIDE

NEWS WORTH SHARING.

City grieves over tragic death of boy

Elijah Marsh.
Three-year-old who died after wandering out into the cold called 'sweet' and 'energetic'

Sadness enveloped the city after a three-year-old boy who wandered outside dressed only in a T-shirt, boots and a pull-up diaper died Thursday, hours after being found frozen in the bitter cold.

Police said Elijah Marsh had disappeared from the north-end apartment of a family member overnight. Two volunteers, part of a massive search by police and the public, found the boy without vital signs, tucked away in the corner of the backyard of a nearby home.

When news of the missing toddler got out just after 8 a.m., people all over the city were talking about him, expressing hope at first, then despair when the news broke that he had not survived.

"You see the picture of that beautiful little boy with a nice smile and the video of the child going out into the cold.... It really is a tragic set of circumstances," Police Chief Bill Blair said.

Elijah's grandmother sobbed and hugged friends as she left her apartment Thursday afternoon.

"No, no, no," was all she could say through tears.

Her longtime friend and neighbour, Millie Dyer, said the family was distraught.

"He's very energetic and runs around all over the place," Dyer said moments before hearing of the boy's death. "He's a very smart little boy."

Dyer said Elijah, whom she called "sweet," was over at his grandmother's place all the time and has two aunts who also live in the same apartment complex.

"When his mom has to work, Elijah is here. And he goes to daycare just down the street," Dyer said.

Family members, who notified police of his disappearance at about 7:30 a.m., said they had put him to bed Wednesday night and woke up to find the front door open and Elijah gone, police said.

THE CANADIAN PRESS/METRO

Timeline of events

- **4:20 a.m.** Security cameras show Elijah walking out into the cold, wearing only a diaper, T-shirt and boots
- **7:30 a.m.** Police receive a call about a missing child
- **8-10 a.m.** More than 100 officers launch a search
- **10 a.m.** Elijah is found with no vital signs on a property on Baycrest Ave.
- **2:05 p.m.** Police announce Elijah did not survive

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Elijah Marsh, 3, in an undated photo.
TORONTO POLICE/THE CANADIAN PRESS

TORONTO TUQUES PRIDE IN ITS 'HOODS

What's the most popular neighbourhood in the city? Folks at the Tuck Shop have let Metro in on which area caps it all in the great Toronto tuque war. Story, page 8. DAVID VAN DYKE/METRO

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NEWS 1

Education

Everest colleges shut down

The governing body for private career colleges has suspended the licence of the Everest College of Business, Technology and Health Care Canada and shut it down, two days after the U.S. parent company was suspended from trading on the Nasdaq stock exchange.

Colleges and Universities Minister Reza Moridi said ministry officials have been dispatched to all 14 Everest Colleges campuses to ensure the 2,400 students are looked after.

"The interest of the students and, of course, the staff, is of prime importance for us," Moridi said Thursday.

In the GTA, Everest has programs in Brampton, Mississauga, Newmarket, North York, Scarborough and downtown Toronto.

Under the Private Career Colleges Act, a $3-million liability fund has been set aside to pay for training completions or refunds for the students who were enrolled in an approved vocational program at the time of Everest College's closure.

"It's too early at this point to see whether it is sufficient or not," the minister said.

An independent superintendent appointed under the act decided the campuses would be closed as of Thursday.

"I understand that the independent superintendent ... made this difficult decision with the best interests of students in mind," Moridi said.

Everest students wanting more information can call 416-314-0500 or toll free at 1-866-330-3395, he said. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Wildlife centre facing 'grebe-mageddon'

Rescues. Deep freeze and ice are creating foul conditions for birds

LUKE SIMCOE
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Space at the Toronto Wildlife Centre is running out as the organization copes with an influx of water fowl rescued from the cold.

In particular, grebes — a cousin of the loon — are arriving at the centre in record numbers.

"It's a grebe-mageddon," spokesperson Julia Pietrus said in a statement.

Grebes can't walk on land, so spend their entire lives swimming or flying, said centre director Nathalie Karvonen. With about 80 per cent of the Great Lakes frozen over, the birds are literally running out of room.

"They're crashing out of the sky onto ice or pavement that they mistake for water," Karvonen said.

In the past week alone, the centre has admitted 14 grebes suffering from malnutrition, injuries or exposure.

"That's usually how many we'll get in a year," Karvonen said.

It's the second winter in a row the centre has dealt with a surge of grebes and other water birds. In 2014 — a year that saw Georgian Bay freeze for the first time in recent history — 130 birds were dropped off.

The Great Lakes already have more ice cover than last year and, with no end to the cold spell in sight, Karvonen said she believes more birds are bound for the shelter.

"It's grebes coming in now, but if last year was any indication we're going to see other species coming in fast and furious," she said. "And we only have so many enclosures or pools that are appropriate for water birds."

The wildlife centre is hoping an uptick in donations can help cover the costs of care and food, which is tricky because grebes will eat only live fish.

Water birds like this horned grebe are being brought to the Toronto Wildlife Centre in record numbers. Director Nathalie Karvonen says ice cover on Lake Ontario is to blame. CONTRIBUTED

Details

Rehabilitating the birds is only the first step, Toronto Wildlife Centre director Nathalie Karvonen said.

- Once the grebes are healthy, they will need to be relocated to an area where there's open water — something that's in short supply these days in icy Ontario. So, the centre is looking into ways to ship the birds to the Atlantic Ocean.
- Until arrangements can be made, however, the wildlife centre is struggling with overcrowding.
- "We ran out of space last year," Karvonen said. "And that's our real fear here, because these birds have nowhere else to go."

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HUDSON'S BAY

Tory: $2M for poverty reduction

Mayor John Tory has revealed the first steps in his poverty reduction strategy, including more than $2 million to provide free meals for students, transportation for seniors and more.

Tory, with Coun. Pam McConnell, who is spearheading the strategy, announced Thursday they will propose to the budget committee $2.2 million in new spending that includes:

Expanding the student nutrition program, which gives free meals to low-income students, to 27 new schools.

Launching a pilot project to assist parents on Ontario Works "to achieve meaningful employment."

Expanding the Connect2-youth employment and training program that helps at-risk youth finish their education, build skills and train for a job.

Launching a pilot project to provide senior citizens with transportation "so they can get to appointments, access services and participate in community events."

Expanding "youth hubs" at four Toronto Public Library sites for the after-school drop-in program, to give students in Grades 7 to 10 free tutoring help, workshops and other activities.

McConnell said the spending is the start of a full poverty-reduction strategy that she will unveil in June, which Tory says has no total cost yet.

McConnell will present the $2.2-million in proposals to the city's budget committee Friday, when it wraps up deliberations on the 2015 proposed operating and capital budgets.

Asked where the money is coming from, Tory said it is already accounted for in his proposed budget and he is now putting details to the dollar figures. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

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Youth advocate Kevin Vuong says young people want a new police chief who understands the relationship between power and privilege. CONTRIBUTED

Youth voice wishes for police chief

Toronto Youth Cabinet. Group wants chief who 'doesn't shoot people,' preferably not a middle-aged white man

LUKE SIMCOE
luke.simcoe@metronews.ca

Young people in Toronto want a police chief who understands concepts like racism and privilege, who is a woman or a non-white person and who "doesn't shoot people."

That's according to the Toronto Youth Cabinet, which asked the city's youth about their hopes for outgoing police chief Bill Blair's successor.

Many of the 120 youth surveyed said they want the city's top cop to be more socially progressive. The list of responses was littered with references to discrimination, sexism, poverty and mental health.

"They spoke a lot about wanting a chief that's received training in anti-racism and anti-oppression," said youth cabinet member Kevin Vuong. "They want someone who understands the relationship between power and privilege."

A number of respondents also expressed a desire for the chief to be someone other than a middle-aged white man.

Others asked simply for the chief — and by extension the whole force — to "leave (them) alone," while one person just wrote "f–k the police."

"We can chuckle at that, but it's a symptom of something. It's rooted in some kind of mistrust," Vuong said.

The results of the survey were presented to the police board Thursday, where Vuong and his colleagues lobbied to revive the police chief's youth advisory committee.

The panel was formed in 2005 to advise the chief on youth issues, but "fell by the wayside" a few years ago, Vuong said.

In numbers

According to data from the Toronto Youth Cabinet, 39 per cent of those charged with criminal offences in 2012 were between the ages of 12 and 24.

Youth advocate Kevin Vuong contrasts that with the force itself, where a third of uniformed officers have at least 20 years of service.

"Youth are overrepresented in terms of people who interact with police, but are underrepresented, or dare I say not represented, at the oversight level," Vuong said.

Waterfront

Another setback for Queens Quay

Waterfront Toronto says underground work will delay the finishing touches of a major revitalization project ahead of the Pan Am Games this summer.

CEO John Campbell said Thursday that work by Toronto Hydro on the Queens Quay renewal has set back plans to finish the job before July — delays the corporation knew about in November but only reported at a board meeting this week.

The problem area centres on a stretch of road at Rees Street — part of the major resurfacing and enhancements that include new greenery and installation of granite sidewalks. Toronto Hydro recently said it needs more time to install increased power supply to the area for future use.

Campbell stressed the project will be completed as planned, but contractors will have to go back to make the final finishes after the Games are over.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Tree-planting target 'ambitious'

Urban forest. Plan to grow adequate canopy calls for a million trees

LUKE SIMCOE
luke.simcoe@metronews.ca

It's going to get easier to find a little shade in Toronto if a plan being floated at city hall moves ahead.

City staff is asking council to approve an ambitious plan to grow the tree canopy by planting more than one million trees by 2023.

Brian Mercer, supervisor of forest policy for Toronto, said the plan is needed to meet the city's goal of 40 per cent canopy cover — right now we're at about 28 per cent — while also mitigating the effect of the emerald ash borer.

"It's moving through the city quicker than anticipated," Mercer said of the invasive beetle. "We expect it's going to kill a lot of trees."

About 860,000 of the city's 10 million trees are ash, Mercer said, and each of them is at risk. The 2013 ice storm also had a negative impact on the city's canopy.

"We obviously lost some of the trees, and others were damaged," he said. "We're working to address that damage now."

A fallen tree lies on top of a car on Wellesley Street after the ice storm in Toronto in December 2013. The city is addressing some of the damage to the tree canopy with a plan to plant more than one million trees by 2023. MATTHEW SHERWOOD/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Based on budget documents, the total cost of the planting program will be just under $80 million, or roughly $75 per tree.

Mercer believes it's a small price to pay.

"Trees clean the air we breathe, they help deal with stormwater issues … and they can help avoid erosion," he said.

Meaghan Eastwood, a project manager at the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority, applauded the city's plan but noted it will likely require co-operation "from all levels of government" to succeed.

"Forty per cent canopy cover is on the high end," she said. "It's quite ambitious, but it's a common target that cities across North America strive for."

By the numbers

860,000

Number of Toronto ash trees threatened by the emerald ash borer

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Thirty-five city rinks closing Sunday

Public spaces.
Torontonians again wonder why outdoor hot spots are closing so early in the season

With Toronto firmly in winter's icy grip, Gary Sullivan was shocked to see a city notice saying his local rink will close for the season Sunday.

And it's not just Wedgewood Park — a total of 35 City of Toronto outdoor rinks will shut down, weather and crowds be damned. A further 17 will remain open until March 22, the end of March Break.

"You see how much money goes for Pan Am (Games) and whatnot, and it makes no sense to me, or anybody I talk to, not to keep all the rinks open," said Sullivan, who takes his five-year-old grandson Griffin to the neighbourhood hot spot near Martingrove and Burnhamthorpe.

"I personally wouldn't care if my taxes went up a little bit to pay to keep the rinks open, especially when it's so cold. Hundreds of kids use that rink, a lot of them walk there after school, and if they're not doing that they're watching TV or playing in the mall."

The mercury is forecast to hit only -13 C on Friday, struggle up to -2 C on Sunday — when the 35 rinks will feel their last blades — then drop like a rock next week.

There was an uproar last year when Toronto, in a similar deep freeze, was set to close all rinks before March Break, as per the council-approved budget.

Scotiabank and Canadian Tire stepped in with $270,000 to keep 11 rinks open until kids were back in school.

In 2014 budget deliberations, city council did recognize that anger, while limiting the residential tax hike to 2.71 per cent. The roughly $6-million outdoor-rinks budget was adjusted to open some on Nov. 22, a week earlier, while extending the season for the 17 rinks until the end of March Break.

City of Toronto parks director Richard Ubbens said in an interview that "there are staffing costs, equipment costs — we work within our funding envelope, otherwise taxes would be all over the place.

"I understand that there is some interest in a long season.... Toronto has a lot of rinks, there's a lot of interest, but they do cost a lot of money. The overall season is defined by city council."

He noted that opening and closing dates for all the rinks have been posted on the city website since November. In his five years as parks boss, a call for longer skating seasons has been heard only in the past two, because these winters were unusually cold, Ubbens said.

At least one councillor, Scarborough East's Paul Ainslie, said the city needs to fix the problem, even if it means spending some money.

"It kind of slips through the cracks every year," Ainslie said. "Weather permitting, the rinks should stay open. We need to look at the parks budget."

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Gary Sullivan with his five-year-old grandson Griffin Miller at Wedgewood Park's outdoor rink on Thursday. Many city rinks have been targeted for an early closure. ANDREW FRANCIS WALLACE/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Quoted

"You see how much money goes for Pan Am (Games) and whatnot, and it makes no sense to me, or anybody I talk to, not to keep all the rinks open." Gary Sullivan

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RICOH COLISEUM AT EXHIBITION PLACE

T.O. officers charged with sexual assault

Court appearance. Alleged victim of off-duty incident is a female member of the force, union president says

Three Toronto police officers from 51 Division have been charged with sexual assault and gang sexual assault in an alleged attack on a woman last month.

Constables Leslie Nyznik, 38, Joshua Cabero, 28, and Sameer Kara, 31, turned themselves in Thursday morning and appeared in court in connection with a Jan. 17 incident, according to a police statement.

Police union president Mike McCormack previously told Torstar News Service that the alleged victim is a female member of the Toronto Police Service. The officers, who have been on the force for six or fewer years, were off-duty at the time of the alleged assault, police said in a statement Thursday.

Standing side-by-side in the prisoner's box, the men wore solemn expressions as the allegations against them were read aloud in court. When asked if they agreed to the terms of bail, each replied, "Yes, I do."

The judge issued a publication ban on evidence heard Thursday and on the alleged victim's identity.

TPS spokesperson Mark Pugash said the officers have been suspended with pay, which is required under the Police Services Act unless an officer is sentenced to jail time.

Bail conditions

- Each officer was released on $15,000 bail. The three are prohibited by their bail conditions from contacting the alleged victim or each other, except to plan their defence.
- They were also ordered not to possess or consume alcohol and to avoid two downtown Toronto bars and a strip club.

"At the conclusion of the criminal process, there will be a Police Services Act investigation, and the maximum penalty ... is dismissal," Pugash said.

The men were released to sureties, who pledged to turn them in if they violate their bail conditions. A woman who said she lives with Cabero acted as his surety. Kara's father stood in as his, while a close friend of Nyznik served as his.

Cabero left the courthouse first, followed by Kara and Nyznik, who exited together. All three refused to answer questions from the media, as did their lawyer, Gary Clewley.

At a press conference, Police Chief Bill Blair would not confirm how long the investigation took, but rejected suggestions that it had failed in any way.

Ontario's police watchdog, the Special Investigations Unit (SIU), previously told Torstar it does not normally conduct investigations involving off-duty officers. The officers will next appear in court March 20.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

The three police officers charged with sexual assault are, from left, Leslie Nyznik, Sameer Kara and Joshua Cabero. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Officer Joshua Cabero leaves 2201 Finch Courthouse on Thursday. He was one of three policeman charged with sexual assault and gang sexual assault in connection with an incident on Jan. 17. MANISHA KRISHNAN/ TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Cabbagetown is top tuque hood

Retail. Locally made product has been selling like hot cakes, says shop owner

GILBERT NGABO
gilbert.ngabo@metronews.ca

Cabbagetown is eclipsing the rest of Toronto when it comes to people being proud of their hood.

That is if you go by sales numbers at Tuck Shop Trading Company, a local shop that makes tuques.

Sounds crazy, right? Well, the store doesn't sell your average tuque. It sells them with names of various Toronto neighbourhoods woven, with love, into the fabric.

And, the locally-made product has been selling like hot cakes lately, said Lyndsay Borschke, designer and shop owner.

"We're now getting tons of requests from so many neighbourhoods," she said on the phone from Las Vegas, where the shop is launching similar merchandise.

"I think people get wind of what's happening, and they're like: 'I don't see my neighbourhood, and I want to represent,'" she said. "People take it very seriously."

When she opened up shop in the Rosedale area two years ago, Borschke only had a few items representing 14 neighbourhoods.

Prompted by requests, the shop now has tuques for more than 30 neighbourhoods, along with other clothing like T-shirts, scarves, blankets and jackets.

While people do love their neighbourhoods, sales of merchandise representing Toronto as a whole come in at the top of the chart.

"Toronto's profile has been becoming cooler as of late," Borschke said, referring to recent international reports ranking the city as one of the best places to live.

Taylor Seymour, who works at the nearby Boxcar Social bar, is among those who's become a fan of what's on offer. A few months ago, he saw a friend wearing a tuque representing his neighbourhood of Leslieville.

"I bought him a new one of his own neighbourhood so he could exchange with me," Seymour said.

Lat summer, Borschke launched lines in Ottawa, Montreal and London, Ont. Expansion plans are in the works for Los Angeles, New York City, Boston, Chicago, San Francisco and Detroit.

Tuck tuques

- Tuck Shop Trading Company sold more than 20,000 tuques in 2014.
- Each tuque sells for $38.
- The top hipster hoods, according to Tuck Shop sales, are Cabbagetown, Parkdale, Roncy, Leslieville, Queen West, Scarborough, the Danforth and the Annex.

The Tuck Shop Trading Company is the go-to place if your Toronto pride is riding high. DAVID VAN DYKE/METRO

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From east to west, north to south, artist Gigo Elmoselhi has you covered if you want to show your love for the city.
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Spreading even more love

Neighbourhood pride. T-shirts representing Toronto regions go on sale

GILBERT NGABO
gilbert.ngabo@metronews.ca

What started as a fun art project for Toronto artist Gigo Elmoselhi is quickly turning into a serious venture with the potential for expansion into other cities.

Elmoselhi, art director and founder of The Neighbourhood Project, says he started designing T-shirts displaying Toronto neighbourhood names back in 2013, "just to fight boredom."

Now, the shirts are attracting so much interest he's offering them up online to the tune of $24.99 each.

The selling point? Neighbourhood love has become trendy.

Many people feel a deep connection to a place they call home, and emblazoning its name across their chest is one of the best ways to express that.

"Toronto's filled with neighbourhoods within so many areas, and we want everyone to represent theirs," Elmoselhi said.

Buyers' favourites, so far, include Scarborough, The Beaches and Chinatown, along with Little Italy, Korea Town and Etobicoke, Elmoselhi said.

All the shirts are imported, but the design and printing are done here, he said.

The designs don't really represent individual neighbourhoods. But each is "fun," "creative" and, of course, "looks great on a T-shirt."

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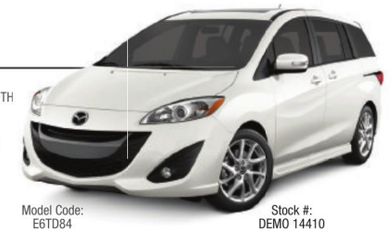

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Byelection case in prosecutor's hands

Sudbury. Elections Ontario chief rules two Liberals contravened Election Act

Attorney General Madeleine Meilleur said her officials made the decision to pass the case to the Public Prosecution Service of Canada, which was already working on the OPP's criminal investigation. COLIN PERKEL/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Greg Essensa, Ontario's chief electoral officer. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Election Act

At issue is Section 96 of the Election Act, which Ontario's chief electoral officer Greg Essensa said "concerns bribery in connection with inducing a person to become, refrain from becoming, or withdrawing from being a candidate."

It's all in the hands of the police and federal prosecutors now. Parallel investigations of alleged job offers by two Liberal operatives in the Sudbury byelection are being quarterbacked by the Ontario Provincial Police.

Already probing accusations that approaches to former Liberal candidate Andrew Olivier were illegal under the Criminal Code, the OPP is taking over files from Elections Ontario, whose chief Greg Essensa ruled Thursday that two Liberals committed an "apparent contravention" of anti-bribery provisions in the Election Act.

"My office is not mandated to conduct prosecutions," Essensa said in a statement, noting he was obligated to escalate matters to Ontario's Ministry of the Attorney General after reaching his "unprecedented" finding.

"It is up to the police service … whether to lay charges in consultation with the Crown, which has carriage of any prosecution."

With opposition parties calling for an independent prosecutor, Attorney General Madeleine Meilleur said her officials in turn made the decision to pass the case to the Public Prosecution Service of Canada, which was already working on the OPP's criminal investigation.

No charges have been laid in either case and the Liberals have denied any wrongdoing.

"I was informed this morning that earlier this week, the case was referred to the police and the case has been transferred to the federal Crown office," Meilleur told reporters Thursday.

A conviction carries a maximum penalty of $25,000 and jail term of two years less a day.

The other track of the OPP probe involves Section 125 of the Criminal Code on "influencing or negotiating appointments or dealing in offices."

It states "every one who … solicits, recommends or negotiates in any manner with respect to an appointment to or resignation from an office, in expectation of a direct or indirect reward, advantage or benefit … is guilty of an indictable offence and liable to imprisonment for a term not exceeding five years."

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Public board reforms don't go far enough, Sandals says

The Toronto District School Board could face a provincial takeover if it doesn't remove trustee involvement in hiring principals, reduce director Donna Quan's say in her own performance reviews, and draw up a sharper game plan for school repairs, Education Minister Liz Sandals warns.

"It is clear that more work is needed," Sandals said in a tough response Thursday to the board's plan for complying with 13 marching orders she had issued to tackle the board's dysfunction. "The response I received from the board raises some concerns."

Sandals issued the orders after a report she commissioned by educator Margaret Wilson to solve issues of infighting and dysfunction at the board called for reducing trustee involvement in the day-to-day running of schools, salary rollbacks among senior staff, and plans to deal with underused schools, all to be accomplished in 29 days. The board submitted its response two days before last Friday's deadline, having voted to fulfil all 13 demands.

Yet Sandals said Thursday that trustees hadn't gone far enough; they should not have retained any involvement in the hiring of principals, vice-principals and superintendents, and Quan should not have kept such a "high degree of control" over her own performance appraisal.

"I am not appointing an investigator at this time, however in light of these concerns … I am not ruling out that it may be a necessary measure," Sandals said in a statement. She wants ministry officials to meet as soon as possible with the board to discuss its plans to address her recent concerns.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

AGENTSOFCHANGE

Eleven Torontonians who are building a better city

This is the fourth part of a series exploring how 11 groups and individuals plan to make Toronto a better place through the Centre for Social Innovation's Agents of Change program. Each is being setup for a year with the essential supplies they need to turn their ideas into reality.

KELSEY KUDAK/FOR METRO
toronto@metronews.ca

Duo diversifies tech culture in Rexdale

Sam Allemang, left, and Andray Domise. CONTRIBUTED

Andray Domise and Sam Allemang are creating a geek mecca, a place for Rexdale youth to develop IT skills and gather for hack-a-thons, pizza parties and video game tournaments.

Techsdale, as they call it, will offer classes in web design and app development, but also give kids an opportunity to develop contacts in an industry that's largely unavailable to them.

The pair first collaborated when Allemang offered IT support for Domise's Ward 2 campaign against Rob Ford for city council in the fall. Techsdale was a part of his platform, figuring if kids are going to the library to play video games, why not teach them how to make them?

"Just because I didn't get elected doesn't mean it's not my responsibility to keep that promise," Domise said.

As a partner with the Centre for Social Innovation, Techsdale will run a 12-spot pilot program for 14- to 17-year-olds this summer. Next fall, they'll fully open at Kisomo Learning Centre, with multiple programs and, eventually, mobile, school-based workshops.

Allemang, who teaches kids to code at CoderDojo and at The Boys and Girls Club of Toronto, is planning a project-based curriculum. Students would take weekly courses with increasing ambition to make a portfolio.

Placing Techsdale in Rexdale promotes tech as a lucrative career option and is a way to bring diversity to the tech industry.

"What we're not getting out of this medium is someone else's story or seeing yourself through someone else's eyes," said Domise, who wants to battle the stereotypically "gritty, square-jawed superhero" with multi-dimensional, multicultural characters in video games.

Whether it's websites or games, tech is "the creative art form of the 21st century," Allemang said.

"No one should feel like they're excluded from the opportunity to participate in that."

Leading the way toward creative solutions

CONTRIBUTED

Toronto doesn't need a creative director to decide if street sign lettering should be sans-serif or to designate its colour scheme.

"What it needs is an office that's a kind of magnet for creative collaboration," said Jason Logan.

Logan is working to make a creative director part of Toronto's bureaucracy, a vision that aims to ensure creativity as a problem-solving method is honoured and respected at city hall.

After a successful campaign launch last summer, Logan, a graphic designer, is now drafting how the position would work.

He's working with a diverse group of people, and there are a lot of options for how the job would function. It could be an entire department at city hall, for example, or just one person. It could be appointed or elected.

To Logan, imagery as a problem-solving technique is largely ignored.

"I'm not even good at talking on the phone," he said. "I'm used to doodling it out. My whole career has been about explaining things through words and pictures together, and I just feel like there's a lot of potential for that in a civic setting."

The idea struck after the original plans for the new 14 Division police station were unveiled.

Logan, who had recently bought a house across the street, was dreading the boxy, prison-like design. He mobilized his neighbours and fought the architectural plans. Ultimately, the building was redesigned.

The police station also inspired Logan's proposed "ugly buildings tax," which would do exactly as the name implies: put tariffs on eyesores.

"That tax," said Logan, "should go into a pot that makes beautiful things: a bridge or public sculpture or art or parks."

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Kenney praises anti-terrorism bill

Security. More homegrown jihadist terror attacks possible, says defence minister

Defence Minister Jason Kenney sang the praises of the federal government's anti-terror bill Thursday as he used his maiden speech to Canada's military establishment to warn that more homegrown terror attacks are likely.

The country is engaged in a long-term ideological struggle with radical Islam, Kenney told the annual Ottawa gathering hosted by the Conference of Defence Associations Institute.

"We need only to look to Copenhagen, to Paris, to Brussels and to Sydney," Kenney said. The notion that western civilization and style of government are never going to be challenged is wrongheaded, he added. Canada's geographic remoteness, prosperity and pluralism "have given Canadians reason to think that we can avoid real threats to our peaceable dominion. Yet we face a global movement that quite literally defies reason."

Kenney, who took over from Rob Nicholson earlier this month, says the country "shouldn't overreact to this threat, nor should we underreact."

Debate over the government's proposed Bill C-51, which would increase the powers of security agencies, notably the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS), began earlier this week in the House of Commons.

The concerns of the bill's critics are exaggerated, Kenney said. "We are taking all of these steps while respecting the rights of Canadians."

New Democrats oppose the legislation. The Liberals have said they will support it, but promise to fix some of the flaws if they form government after this year's election.

One of the loudest complaints about the bill is that it lacks additional oversight of intelligence services to prevent possible excesses. The government says no new mechanisms or bodies are needed beyond what already exists.

Bill C-51 is the government's response to the killing last October of two Canadian soldiers, one of whom died during the Oct. 22 attack on Parliament Hill. The bill is meant to counter the threat of homegrown radicalism. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Budget

DND, CSIS, RCMP unable to spend $11B since 2007

New figures show the country's three major national security institutions were collectively unable to spend $11 billion of their budgets over the last eight years.

The statistics on lapsed funds at National Defence, the CSIS and the RCMP were presented today. The numbers contrast with the rosy assessment of the government's defence spending record as presented by Jason Kenney. Kenney dismissed the argument over lapsed funding, saying all departments do it as part of the budget process, an explanation the government used when it was revealed Veterans Affairs gave back $1.13 billion in unspent cash.
THE CANADIAN PRESS

It's Lucky the Bison knocking

Sandy Melanson pets a bison at her front door in Dryden, Ont., on Tuesday. Melanson says the runaway bison from a nearby ranch came up the driveway and right up to their front door. She says the animal, named Lucky, has wandered away a few times from the Northern Buffalo Ranch down the road.
HANDOUT/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Quebec

Family of strip-searched teen girl to sue school board

The lawyer representing the family of a 15-year-old girl who was strip-searched at a Quebec City high school says they intend to take the school board to court.

Lawyer Francois David Bernier says the high school misinterpreted government guidelines on searching students and humiliated his client.

The incident sparked outrage across the country after the girl told a local paper she felt violated by the search one week ago. The school proceeded with the search after officials suspected her of selling drugs.

Bernier said he has not officially filed any documents in court and is still evaluating the damage done to his client. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Oversight

Ex-PMs call for better intelligence accountability

Four former prime ministers and several retired Supreme Court members are among almost two dozen prominent Canadians calling for stronger security oversight.

Their statement comes as the Conservative government proposes an expanded mandate for the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS) .

"Protecting human rights and protecting public safety are complementary objectives, but experience has shown that serious human rights abuses can occur in the name of maintaining national security," the statement says.

The statement was signed by Jean Chrétien, Paul Martin, Joe Clark, John Turner and 18 others involved in security matters over the years. THE CANADIAN PRESS

A pro-Russia rebel cossack, second left, hugs another rebel in Debaltseve, eastern Ukraine, Thursday.
PETER LEONARD/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Rebel fighters gain control of key town

Debaltseve. Retreating Ukrainian soldiers grim with at least 13 dead and hundreds missing, captured

For the rebel fighters who seized control of this strategic town, Thursday was a day of jubilation and bragging of victory. The retreating Ukrainian soldiers were grim, stunned and relieved to have escaped with their lives as the scope of their losses became clearer: at least 13 dead and hundreds missing, captured or wounded.

Rebel fighters roamed the debris-littered streets of Debaltseve, laughing, hugging and posing for photos a day after the fall of the furiously contested railway hub. Associated Press journalists found its neighbourhoods destroyed and all under the control of the rebels.

On the road out of town, dozens of Ukrainian military vehicles, many riddled with bullet holes and with their windshields smashed, were heading to the government-held city of Artemivsk.

The soldiers inside described weeks of harrowing rebel shelling, followed by a hasty retreat. "We left under heavy fire, driving on back roads," said a soldier who gave only his first name, Andrei. "As we were leaving, we were attacked by artillery and grenade launchers. We came under repeated attack by tanks and assault groups."

As rebels waved separatist flags, Nikolai Kozitsyn, a Russian Cossack leader and prominent warlord in the rebel-controlled east, drove around in a Humvee-like vehicle captured from Ukrainian troops.

All around lay the wrecked remains of Ukrainian armoured vehicles. Rebel fighters, many of them Cossacks, searched through the bunkers and tents of an abandoned military encampment, looking to salvage equipment and clothing left behind.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

ISIL

Group showing signs of strain, infighting in Syria

As ISIL tries to expand and take root across the Middle East, it is struggling in Syria — part of its heartland — where it has stalled or even lost ground while fighting multiple enemies on several fronts. Signs of tension and power struggles are emerging among the ranks of its foreign fighters. The extremists remain a formidable force, and the group's hold on about a third of Iraq and Syria remains firm. But it appears to be on the defensive in Syria and is suffering from months of U.S.-led coalition airstrikes and the myriad factions fighting it on the ground.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

U.S. Obama says Muslims must fight 'ugly lie' that West is at war with Islam

President Barack Obama called on the world Thursday to confront efforts to use Islam to justify violence, saying Muslim communities in particular have a responsibility to push back on "twisted interpretations of Islam" and the belief that the West is at war with the religion.

With ISIL spreading and terrorists gaining strength in the Mideast and Africa, Obama has sought to use a White House summit this week on violent extremism to urge the world to broaden its response far beyond military interventions. U.S. airstrikes have managed to blunt some of the militants' gains in Iraq and Syria, but they don't address the extreme ideologies that underpin deadly groups such as ISIL, al-Shabab and Boko Haram. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

President Barack Obama speaks at the Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) Summit, Thursday. PABLO MARTINEZ MONSIVAIS/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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A "superbug" outbreak suspected in the deaths of two patients at UCLA Medical Center in Los Angeles has raised questions about the procedures for disinfecting a frequently used medical instrument. DAMIAN DOVARGANES/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Apparent 'superbug' deaths linked to tainted instrument

Antibiotic resistance. Incompletely sterilized endoscopes carries lethal bacteria

A "superbug" outbreak suspected in the deaths of two patients at a Los Angeles hospital has raised questions about the adequacy of the procedures for disinfecting a type of medical instrument used on more than a half-million people in the U.S. every year.

At least seven people — two of whom died — have been infected by a potentially lethal, antibiotic-resistant strain of bacteria after undergoing endoscopic procedures at Ronald Reagan UCLA Medical Center between October and January, and more than 170 other patients may have been exposed as well, UCLA said.

The germ is known as Carbapenem-resistant Enterobacteriaceae, or CRE.

UCLA said Wednesday that the infections may have been transmitted through at least two contaminated endoscopes that were used to diagnose and treat pancreatic and bile-duct problems. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Battery maker suing Apple

Electric cars. A123 Systems alleges staff poached for nearly identical division amid reports of secret Apple electric vehicle project

Battery maker A123 Systems is suing Apple, claiming it aggressively poached some key staff members in violation of their nondisclosure and non-compete agreements when they left A123.

According to a lawsuit filed in U.S. District Court in Massachusetts, A123 is seeking a restraining order and preliminary injunction to stop former employee Mujeeb Ijaz from hiring former A123 employees at Apple, where he now works. A123 makes lithium-ion batteries for electric cars and other products,

"It appears that Apple, with the assistance of defendant Ijaz, is systematically hiring away A123's high-tech PhD and engineering employees, thereby effectively shutting down various projects/programs at A123," A123 says in the complaint.

General Motors and Tesla Motors have electric cars in the works, and Nissan is already selling an electric car called the Leaf. GM said Thursday it will start building the Chevrolet Bolt electric car in 2017. It will have a 320-kilometre range and will cost $37,500 US. Tesla Motors plans to start selling a 320-kilometre-per-charge car about the same time. The Model 3 price is likely to be well below $30,000 US.

A123 received a $249-million US government grant in 2009 to help it build U.S. factories, but it posted repeated losses and filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection in 2012, selling off assets.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Market Minute

DOLLAR 80.01¢ (-0.52¢)

TSX 15,180.33 (-32.42)

OIL $51.16 US (-98¢)

GOLD $1,207.60 US (+$7.40)

Natural gas: $2.834 US (-0.3¢)
Dow Jones: 17,985.77 (-44.08)

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*[1] Make no payments for 90 days when you purchase finance a new unregistered 2015 Toyota vehicle through Toyota Financial Services Canada. Offer applies on approved credit to retail customers who purchase and take delivery by February 2, 2015. The first monthly payment will be deferred for 60 days (until the 90th day of the contract) and finance contracts will be extended accordingly. Interest charges will not accrue during the first 60 days of the contract. After 60 days, interest starts to accrue and the purchaser will repay principal and interest over the term of the contract.

TTC RENEWAL UNDERWAY ON MANY FRONTS

ANDY BYFORD
CEO
TORONTO TRANSIT COMMISSION

Our Five-Year Corporate Plan to modernize the TTC is made up of three key elements.

In previous columns, I have described the steps that we are taking to modernize our vehicles and our infrastructure and this is a theme that I will return to next week when I will update you on the delivery of our new streetcar fleet.

Last week, I outlined how we are working to transform the culture of our company to make it customer-led, welcoming and consistently excellent.

The third element is a comprehensive review and renewal of our business processes to make us more efficient, to enable us to provide better customer service and to create a transit authority that it is fit for the future.

We are reviewing every aspect of our operations to incorporate best practice and to leverage efficiencies from modern business systems. Most of the TTC's business platforms date back to the 1970s, including those that provide financial and people information. We have kept these systems going as long as we can, but this is inherently inefficient so we made the case last year to migrate to a modern System Application and Products (SAP) platform that will streamline our administration.

In that same business case last year, we secured funding to fit our surface vehicles with a modern tracking and communications system, replacing the 1970s-era, text-based arrangement that holds us back from keeping customers fully informed. This new system will be fitted to streetcars and buses by the end of next year and in parallel, we will create a unified control centre, co-located with the existing subway control facility, to provide better oversight of our street-level operations.

Every other process will be reviewed to ensure that it adds value and that it puts customers first. We are adopting modern Enterprise Risk and Safety, Health and Environmental Management systems, building on best practice from around the world. We are also tracking each part of our transformation via a dedicated Program Management Office, which is new to the TTC.

Modernizing the TTC is like piecing together a jigsaw puzzle. A lot has been done in the past three years, but much remains to be done. These are exciting times at the TTC as we work steadfastly towards creating a transit system that makes Toronto proud.

NEW ART WALL AT UNION STATION

The TTC is home to wonderful and unique art that gives each station its own flair. With materials ranging from tile mosaics, sculptures, paintings or quilting, artists share their take on the city. Over the next few months, TOMoves will feature a few select pieces to showcase the beautiful side of transit.

Today, we take a look at the newest artwork; a glass art wall at Union Station entitled "Zones of Immersion" by artist Stuart Reid. The installation will be completed during upcoming subway closures.

TTC TRACK WORK AT CARLTON/CHURCH THIS WEEKEND

This weekend, on Sat., Feb. 21 and Sun., Feb. 22, track work at Carlton St. and Church St will result in the 506-306 Carlton streetcars diverting in both directions via College St., Bay St., Dundas St., Parliament St. back to route. Replacement buses will also operate, providing service on College Street, Carlton Street, Parliament Street and Gerrard Street, between McCaul Street and Broadview Avenue.

CELEBRATING BLACK HISTORY - TTC TRANSIT CONTROL DISPATCHER DENNIS EDIAE

Name:	Position:	Years of Service:
Dennis Ediae	Transit Control Dispatch	10

Dennis Ediae grew up in Benin City, Nigeria and dreamed of being a math teacher. After immigrating to Canada in 2000, he aspired to improve his computer skills and attended a technical college, followed by economic studies at York University. While working as a security supervisor during his studies, a colleague left to work at the Toronto Transit Commission and reported back how great the company was. Dennis kept his eye open for opportunities at the TTC and in 1995 he became a bus operator at Wilson Division and eventually a supervisor at Queensway Division. During a reorganization, Dennis had an opportunity to work at Transit Control and has spent the last 5 years in Transit Control as a Dispatcher. His favourite part of his job is helping people by responding to emergency and customer service calls. Dennis also helps out the local Edo community in Toronto by fundraising to support community initiatives. We asked Dennis:

What is your favourite way to relax? I love watching soccer and basketball surrounded by my three kids (ages 21, 19 and 15) and my wife of 30 years.

What is your favourite music? I'm a huge Bob Marley fan. I love my reggae and also enjoy Jazz music.

What is your favourite food? I love fufu, a traditional Nigerian staple made from pounded yam. In Toronto, there are great Nigerian restaurants. My favourite place to take friends and family is ID Love on Old Weston Road, it has tasty food from home and a friendly atmosphere.

Weekly Customer Service Report

Week ending February 18, 2015

	Actual % / Target %
Subway — Deliver a punctual service	91%* / 97%
Bus — Deliver reliable headway	64% / 65%
Streetcar — Deliver reliable headway	63% / 70%

*Line 3 mechanical issues on Feb. 17

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VOICES

CELEBS DON'T KNOW WHAT THEY'RE TALKING ABOUT

THE KOHLER REPORT
By Rebecca Kohler

Is it just me, or has there been an uptick lately in celebrities touting pseudo-medical advice that seems particularly unsound? From weird pubic care to body-binding workout regimes, the tabloids are starting to look more like quack medical encyclopedias than entertaining gossip rags.

One of the most recent examples of weird body-care advice comes from Gwyneth Paltrow vis-à-vis the V-Steam. Gwyneth recently wrote a post on her lifestyle website, GOOP, about how she had her vagina steamed: "You sit on what is essentially a mini-throne, and a combination of infrared and mugwort steam cleanses your uterus, et al," she said. "If you're in L.A., you have to do it." Sorry, G., but I have my next trip to L.A. all planned out and it involves eating tacos, not cleansing them.

While I used to view celebrity advice and websites such as GOOP as just irritating (GOOP is hard for me to read because my eyes won't stop rolling), I'm starting to wonder if this stuff is actually dangerous.

After Gwyn poached her pants area, doctors went berserk online, citing all sorts of reasons why that is a terrible idea. That part of the female body has an ecosystem, and sending steam through the chute has the potential to throw it off balance. I'd say the idiom, "If it ain't broke, don't fix it" has never been truer than when referring to a vagina.

Kim Kardashian has also touted some iffy practices to the common people. Kim is a fan and advocate of "waist training," which involves wearing a corset, even while you work out — the stupid idea being that you sweat more in your abdomen area. Also, the corset is making your waist tinier because ... well it's not, because that's impossible. Look, I get the science behind binding a baby, but trying to shrink your waist as an adult? You're fully grown, and your bones are hard. Deal. But KK has posted several selfies in her corset, and the masses are listening.

Doctors are upset about the corsets, too. Wearing a corset for extended periods of time — "waist trainers" wear them for up to 12 hours a day — can not only weaken your abdominal muscles but also actually make them atrophy. "Look at my tiny waist! Pay no attention to the shrivelled, dead muscle."

Then there's Selma Hayek, a vocal fan of juice cleanses and/or detoxes who insists that's how she maintains her sexy figure. Studies prove both of these practices to be useless.

No steaming necessary

After Gwyn poached her pants area, doctors went berserk online, citing all sorts of reasons as to why that is a terrible idea.

Real doctors will tell you that your body has a natural detoxification system in place — liver, lungs, skin, etc. — and doesn't need your help.

Let's not forget the celebrity anti-vaxxers who may or may not be partly responsible for the recent measles outbreak in North America. Jenny McCarthy is famously outspoken in saying vaccinations cause autism — which, for the MILLIONTH time, they DON'T — and reality star Kristin Cavallari joined in the fun last year, stating, "There are very scary statistics out there regarding ... vaccines and what they cause: asthma, allergies, ear infections ..." Ear infections? Seriously, lady? Even if that were true, are you saying you'd rather your kid get measles than an ear infection? (I got an ear infection just listening to the interview.)

Considering celebs are rich and successful and generally good-looking, it makes sense that people would look to them for life advice. But as "successful" as someone like Kim Kardashian is, we have to remember she's not a professional of any sort. The best teachings she has to offer probably involve dislodging a bad wedgie.

Please don't take advice from celebrities because a) it can be dangerous; b) it'll cost you a fortune; and, c) when we hear these snippets about their "amazing lives," we're not getting the full story. Did it ever occur to Salma Hayek that she's hot because she can afford $800 face creams and personal trainers and chefs to cook her healthy meals? Gwyneth Paltrow might be steaming her vagina to fill a void (no pun intended) left by her "conscious uncoupling," and Kim Kardashian's waist looks small because she has big boobs and a booty. As for Kristin Cavallari, not vaccinating her kids might be her best bet at getting any sort of publicity. If you absolutely feel like your vagina needs a steam (mine is pretty steamy on its own) or you could lose a few pounds or inches, then OK, but talk to a doctor first. I know your doctor is boring compared to a Hollywood star, but that's because he/she studied a lot to know what's best for you.

Rebecca Kohler is a stand-up comic, writer, actor, gymnast, lawyer and chemist. (Some of this isn't true.) Follow her on Twitter @becca_kohler

Happy face/Sad face

From top dogs to uncomfortable visits, Metro weighs in on the news that made headlines this week:

FAKING IT

Oregon man Aleksander Tomaszewski, who was arrested on suspicion of sexual assault, has gained a couple new charges after allegedly beating himself up while in custody and trying to blame police for his injuries. Video shows a man punching himself in the face as many as 60 times in his holding cell. Just a reminder folks, Big Brother is watching you. Especially if you're in a police station.

DOG-GONE RIGHT!

America's top dog is a Canuck! A mild-mannered beagle named Miss P was named Best in Show at the prestigious Westminster Kennel Club at Madison Square Garden this week. The pooch, who originally hails from Enderby, B.C., has already made the morning talk-show circuit and met Donald Trump.

ROYALLY EMBARRASSING

Like any obligatory trip home to see the parents whose privilege you've spent a lifetime trying to escape but never fully disowned, Canada's visits to England always feel a little off. This time, the weirdness took place at Thursday's official reopening of Canada's newly refurbished high commission in London. Unaccountably, John Baird was there representing us. He's even referred to as foreign minister on the commemorative plaque. You'll recall, of course, that he quit that job weeks ago. Yeah. Awkward.

TIGHTEY WHITEYS

This week in amazing excuses: a Manitoba MP is holding cheap, ill-fitting underwear to account for a "brief" absence from his seat in the House of Commons while a vote was being counted. "I can blame it on a sale that was down at the Hudson's Bay; they had men's underwear on for half price. I bought a bunch that was clearly too small," said Winnipeg Centre representative Pat Martin. Cheeky, Mr. Martin, very cheeky.

STRIP-SEARCHED TEEN

Quebec school officials are under serious fire after strip-searching a 15-year-old student over suspicions she was hiding marijuana. The province's education minister defended such searches as a reasonable safety measure provided they are done in a "respectful" manner. The girl's parents and civil-rights groups vocally disagree.

metro

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SCENE

Focus on fashion

Kathy Griffin
GETTY IMAGES

Kathy Griffin is ready to rip on the red carpet

Kathy Griffin likes to joke (or is she serious?) that, one year on her tax return, she put her profession as "Anonymous." Such is her multi-hyphenate stature: a standup comic, sitcom star, reality-show queen, periodic D-Lister and, now, host of Fashion Police, E! network's couture critique.

Griffin has retrieved the mantel from Joan Rivers, who presided riotously in cahoots with her Joan Rangers until her death last summer.

"She obviously left very big shoes," said Griffin.

"But we agree that it's essential to comedy to be fearless and not be afraid to make enemies — certainly, in Hollywood! C'mon, we're not talking about heads of state here."

As for viewing, Griffin says: "I haven't decided whether to go to a party where I can get more material, or just watch at home, judging harshly in silence."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

NPH's time to shine

Interview. First-time Academy Awards host talks about nerves, his hosting heroes and what he'll do if Kanye crashes the stage

Neil Patrick Harris might use his job as Oscar host as a way to meet his favourite stars. "I have, essentially, an all-access pass to the theatre," Harris said during a recent interview.

"So I love being able to stand there and say hello to people I've never met before. I'm very easily star struck, so it'll be very exciting to shake hands with celebrities."

Harris has hosted the Emmys twice and the Tony Awards four times — and has won both awards. On Sunday, he takes on his first Oscar show. The multitalented entertainer took a few minutes between rehearsals to talk about his plans for the big night.

How is preparing to host the Oscars different from the Tonys or Emmys?
I want to make sure my content is inclusive of everyone watching, and more people watch the Oscars than any other awards show probably combined. I have more filters probably, in terms of content... The Oscars — it's ritual for many people. They see it every single year, and all around the world. So I want to be a little classier and try to be a bit more mainstream while trying to maintain a wink and a nod to those in the know.

You watched all the past Oscar hosts as part of your research. Who stood out for you, and who would you most like to emulate?
My initial answer would probably be Billy Crystal. I was just the right age to be so taken by movies as an idea, and he had such joy and exuberance about the world of film... But as I've done more research, I'm even more impressed now by the older-school generation of Johnny Carson, Bob Hope, and their ability to stand in one place and make (people) feel comfortable just in their demeanour. Because it's a very classy night — everyone's in their tuxedoes and fancy dresses — so I'm hoping to make it feel like an A-list dinner party that you get to come and attend.

How nervous are you?
Well, my job as host is to not be nervous when the show is happening. But I think, in life, being nervous about something that's forthcoming is very helpful, whether it's an awards show or a family gathering or a job interview. If you're too calm and confident, then I think you aren't executing to the best of your ability. So I try not to let nerves get the best of me, but I welcome them because it tends to fuel me to try harder.

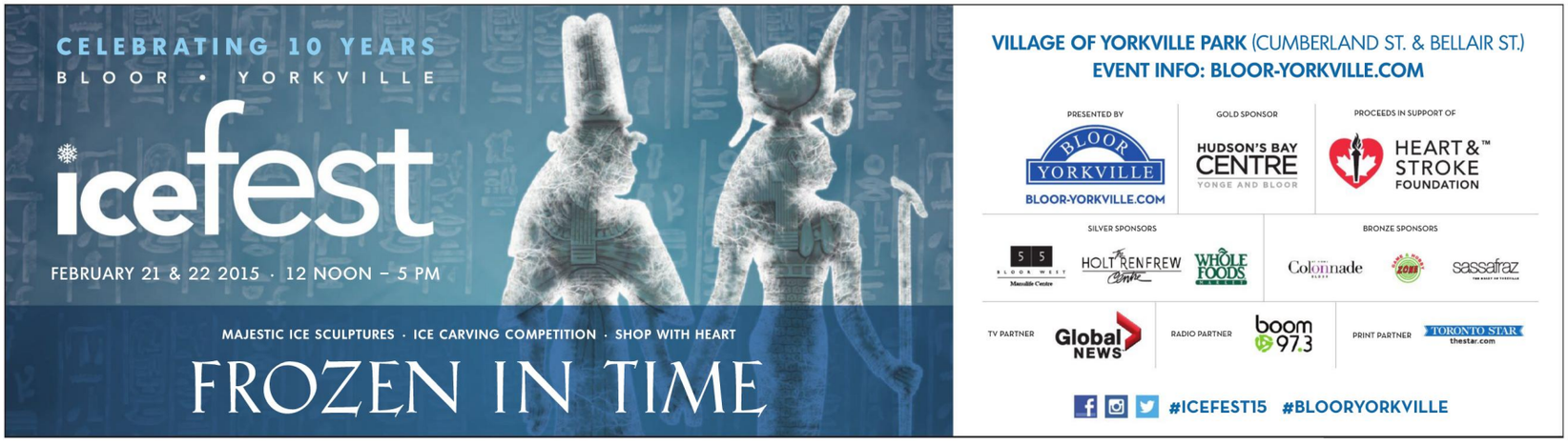
Have you prepared for the possibility of Kanye West coming onstage?

I think the security at Saturday Night Live is still holding him in his seat there from last (week's) show. So, fingers crossed, he's detained in New York City. No, nothing would make me happier than something as random as that, as Kanye West deciding to participate in the show in some way. That's why you want to watch the Oscars. We hope for things to happen that you'll only experience by watching it... The crazier the better, as far as I'm concerned. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

What to watch and when

CTV begins Oscar coverage at 6:30 p.m. on Sunday.

- ETalk's Red Carpet Special starts at 6:30 ET. Ben Mulroney and Lainey Lui will be on a balcony capturing a bird's eye view of red carpet arrivals.
- The Oscars Opening Ceremony, hosted by Good Morning America anchors Robin Roberts and Lara Spencer, starts at 7 p.m., showcasing the nominees, presenters and performers arriving on the ABC red carpet.
- The main event starts at 8:30 p.m.
- You have to be a subscriber to CTV Go to watch the broadcast online. Anyone can stream coverage from the Academy Awards press room at ctv.ca.



If Metro could hack the Academy vote

Rather than waste your time with Oscar predictions, which are bound to be wrong anyway, here's something slightly more useful: What we'd pick, if anyone had asked us.

NED EHRBAR & MATT PRIGGE
For Metro

The Grand Budapest Hotel CONTRIBUTED

Best picture

What should win: Wes Anderson's Grand Budapest Hotel is the kind of carefully crafted, completely realized vision that should be edging out Boyhood and Birdman.

What should have been nominated: If the Academy had any guts or vision, it would have celebrated the singular, twisted vision of Dan Gilroy's Nightcrawler, a truly disturbing masterpiece.

Supporting actor

Who should win: He may be only slightly less intimidating than his Oz Neo-Nazi, but J.K. Simmons' jazz instructor in Whiplash was still a thoroughly embodied portrait of a sociopath.

Who should have been nominated: As a 60-year-old virgin, Stellan Skarsgard helped make sure Lars Von Trier's porn epic Nymphomaniac was the infamous filmmaker's funniest and most humane film.

J.K. Simmons GETTY IMAGES

Wes Anderson GETTY IMAGES

Best director

Who should win: Given that he's created his own style of filmmaking, it's frankly incredible The Grand Budapest Hotel creator Wes Anderson hasn't won a directing Oscar yet.

Who should have been nominated: With the ScarJo alien opus Under the Skin, Jonathan Glazer created a genuinely unique film, one that owes as much to the way it was created as it was filmed.

Supporting actress

Who should win: Let's hear it for Keira Knightley, who took what could have been a rather dull, throwaway supporting role in The Imitation Game and quietly ran away with the film, outshining even co-star and fellow nominee Benedict Cumberbatch.

Who should have been nominated: Rene Russo stepped back into the spotlight in outstanding fashion as a cutthroat, desperate local news producer in Nightcrawler.

Keira Knightley and Benedict Cumberbatch CONTRIBUTED

Best actor

Who should win: Hype demands Michael Keaton or Eddie Redmayne win this, but Bradley Cooper's steely and very, very, very quietly anguished turn in American Sniper was one of the reasons the film was more complicated than its fans and detractors claim.

Who should have been nominated: Mysteriously, Ralph Fiennes' super-alert creation — Monsieur Gustave H. in Wes Anderson's The Grand Budapest Hotel — both debonair and lowbrow (and sometimes in the same rattled-off line), was snubbed in favour of actors mostly playing real people.

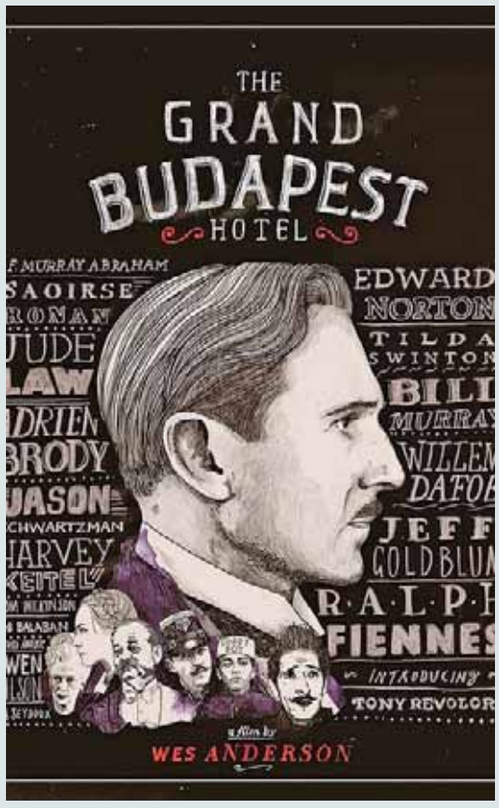
Bradley Cooper in American Sniper CONTRIBUTED

Best actress

Who should win: For once, everyone seems to be in agreement, because no performance this year came close to inevitable winner Julianne Moore for Still Alice.

Who should have been nominated: Into the Woods might not have done much this awards season, but Emily Blunt still deserves recognition for her standout work in the Sondheim musical.

Julianne Moore GETTY IMAGES



Best original screenplay

What should win: Wes Anderson's films are constructed top-to-bottom, and the riots of pink and spot-on performances in The Grand Budapest Hotel are nothing without the solid foundation of its script.

What should have been nominated: Justin Simien's Dear White People shuffles around a score of characters and provocative ideas like pieces on a chessboard.

Best adapted screenplay

What should win: Paul Thomas Anderson should take this one. He did the impossible in bringing a Thomas Pynchon novel to the screen.

What should have been nominated: The Writers Guild decided Guardians of the Galaxy was worthy of recognition, so why couldn't the Academy? Yes, it's a comic book movie, but it's a damn fine comic book movie.

All-white Oscar nominations lay bare lack of diversity

The Academy Awards. Ceremony spotlight draws attention to movie industry's failure to reflect a multicultural America

It was a year ago that Lupita Nyong'o, shortly before winning the Academy Award for best supporting actress in 12 Years a Slave, gave a speech about what she called "dark beauty."

Nyong'o, who so dazzled Hollywood and the Oscar-viewing public through awards season, spoke tenderly of receiving a letter from a girl who had been about to lighten her skin before Nyong'o's success, she said, "saved me." The letter struck Nyong'o because she recognized herself in that girl: "I remember a time when I too felt unbeautiful. I put on the TV and only saw pale skin."

The Mexican-born, Kenyan-raised actress was a central part last year to an Academy Awards flush with faces uncommon to the Oscar podium.

What a difference a year makes.

This year's Oscars repeat a stubborn pattern that has plagued the Academy Awards throughout its history: Whenever change seems to come, a frustrating hangover follows. "Every 10 years, we have the same conversation," Spike Lee, a regular witness to the sporadic progress, has said.

Seldom have such fits and starts been starker than these Oscars, coming a year after a richly diverse Oscar crop. In Sunday's Academy Awards, all 20 acting nominees are white, a result that prompted some to declare that they would boycott this year's ceremony.

The lack of nominations for Selma director Ava DuVernay and star David Oyelowo were a particular flashpoint, viewed by many as unjust oversights not only because they merited honouring, but because their absences furthered an ignoble Oscar history.

Since becoming president of the academy, Cheryl Boone Isaacs has worked to diversify the organization's ranks, though change comes slowly considering membership is for life.

But the academy is a reflection of the film industry; it can only reward the films that get made. What this year's all-white acting nominees did was lay bare the enormous, hulking iceberg of the movie business' diversity problems.

The UCLA diversity report released last year after eight years of research found underrepresentation of minorities and women throughout film and TV, from board rooms to talent agencies.

What's particularly galling for many of those working to change Hollywood is that minorities are among its most passionate customers.

Stacy L. Smith, founder and director of USC Annenberg's Media, Diversity and Social Change Initiative, calls the lack of progress in the industry "egregious."

"Hollywood does not think diversity is commercial," Smith said. "The numbers speak loudly and clearly about who is valued and who isn't." THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

By the numbers

0
The number of this year's 20 acting nominees who are non-white.

1
The number of female best director winners.

4
the percentage of Hispanic roles in 500 top-grossing films in the U.S. in 2013.

6
The percentage of 6,000 plus Academy members who are non-white

9.4
The percentage of non-white nominees in the Academy's 87-year hostory.

Source: The Associated Press survey

Lupita Nyong'o accepts the award for best actress in a supporting role for 12 Years a Slave during the 2014 Oscars. JOHN SHEARER/INVISION/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS FILE

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Ratings: *Certified Fresh:* *Fresh:* *Rotten:* *Audience response:* *Audience anticipation for the film:* +

Drama

McFarland

Director. Niki Caro

Stars. Kevin Costner, Carlos Pratt

From Disney comes McFarland, the true against-all-odds story of the 1987 McFarland high school cross-country team in an economically challenged community.

Rotten Tomatoes™ score
Critics: 67% **Audience:** + 87%

Comedy

The DUFF

Director. Ari Sandel

Stars. Mae Whitman, Robbie Amell

Bianca (Mae Whitman) is a content high school senior whose world is shattered when she learns the student body knows her as 'The DUFF' (Designated Ugly Fat Friend) to her prettier, more popular friends. Now, despite the words of caution from her favourite teacher, she puts aside the potential distraction of her crush and enlists Wesley, a slick but charming jock, to help reinvent herself.

Rotten Tomatoes™ score
Critics: 88% **Audience:** + 91%

Documentary

The Wrecking Crew

Director. Marjane Satrapi

Stars. Herb Alpert, Brian Wilson

What the Funk Brothers did for Motown ... The Wrecking Crew did, only bigger, for the West Coast Sound. Six years in a row in the 1960s and early 1970s, the Grammy for Record of the Year went to Wrecking Crew recordings. And now, The Wrecking Crew tells the story in pictures and that oh, so glorious sound.

Rotten Tomatoes™ score
Critics: No reviews yet **Audience:** + 81%

Comedy

Hot Tub Time Machine 2

Director. Steve Pink

Stars. Craig Robinson, Rob Corddry

Hot Tub Time Machine director Steve Pink returns to the helm for this sequel set 10 years in the future, and starring Rob Corddry, Adam Scott, Clark Duke, and Craig Robinson.

Rotten Tomatoes™ score
Critics: No reviews yet **Audience:** + 92%

Drama

Siddharth

Director. Richie Mehta

Stars. Rajesh Tailang, Anurag Arora

Mehendra is a chain-wallah, eking out a living fixing zippers on the bustling streets of New Delhi. To ease his financial woes, he sends twelve-year-old Siddharth to work in a distant factory. When the boy doesn't come home for the Diwali holiday, Mehendra and his wife Suman slowly begin to suspect that he was kidnapped by child traffickers.

Rotten Tomatoes™ score
Critics: 88% **Audience:** 72%

Documentary

Matt Shepard Is A Friend of Mine

Director. Lina Plioplyte

Stars. Ari Seth Cohen

On Oct. 7, 1998, University of Wyoming student Matthew Shepard was brutally beaten, tied to a fence and left to die because he was gay. Years later, Michele Josue, a close friend of Matt's, revisits the shocking case with never-before-seen photos, rare video footage, as Matt's life is remembered through the vivid testimonies of those whose lives he touched

Rotten Tomatoes™ score
Critics: 100% **Audience:** 94%

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Adam Scott slips into Hot Tub Time Machine

Movies. Stepping into comedy sequel was like going to summer camp with friends, says the Parks and Rec actor

MATT PRIGGE
Metro in New York City

Adam Scott wasn't always a comedic actor. He went to drama school, had stints on Party of Five and Six Feet Under, did a sex-heavy relationship drama at HBO (Tell Me You Love Me) and has been in action (Torque), drama (High Crimes) and a Martin Scorsese movie (The Aviator). But after his turn as Will Ferrell's douchebag corporate shark brother in Step Brothers, he was suddenly part of the comedy fold, appearing in the brilliant but cancelled Party Down and the just-wrapped Parks and Recreation. With Hot Tub Time Machine 2, Scott pops up in another ongoing series, playing the son of John Cusack (who is AWOL) from the far-off future of 2024.

You're no stranger to joining things that are already midstream. Was joining the Hot Tub Time Machine franchise in its first sequel any different?
I already knew Rob (Corddry), Craig (Robinson) and Clark (Duke), so it was easy. I think I said yes before they even wrote it. Steve (Pink), the director, just pitched me a rough idea and I said sure. It was like going to summer camp in New Orleans with your friends. It didn't really feel like work. I feels like you're hanging out with your friends and someone happens to be filming it. I've been lucky to be in a bunch of TV shows and movies that are like that. I would love to hang around and make d— jokes with Rob, Craig and Clark whether it was being filmed or not. It's just a happy coincidence that we got a movie out of it.

But it's not all play, though. You still have to make a movie.
It is work. We are working 15-hour days. It is actual work, and we're tired at the end of the day. It's not like it was a vacation. We all worked really hard to make a good movie. We weren't just trying to make ourselves laugh. We were always trying to find what makes the best scene. It was work, but getting to work with your friends is the best-case scenario. I'm lucky enough to have friends who are really talented and funny and really great actors. It's just a bonus that you get to work with people you enjoy.

Adam Scott with Gillian Jacobs in Hot Tub Time Machine 2. CONTRIBUTED

Scott on the new golden age of television and reality TV

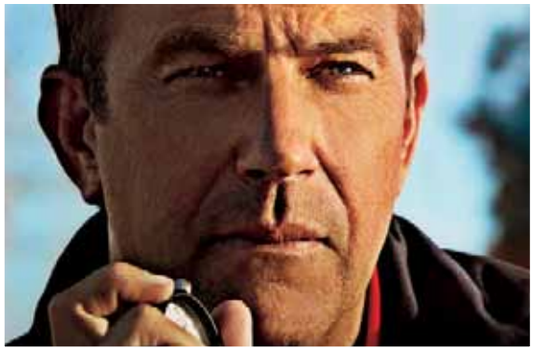
Where do you guess TV may go in 10 years, especially considering that right now we're living in, as many commentators have crowed, a new golden age in television?

- I'm optimistic, and I think quality always rises. I don't think good movies and television will ever stop. Reality TV is permanent, though, and I think it's going to keep getting crazier and crazier. I dread that, but I also look forward to it. I think there's a part of all of us that enjoys that stuff.

Your character here is very earnest and childlike.
It's a fun exercise in every scene to find the most oblivious route to go. I think my character's just happy to have some friends. He's the kind of guy who annoys people with his curiosity and his earnest view of the world. So he doesn't have a lot of male friends. He's not able to tell he's annoying the s— out of them.

This isn't hard sci-fi, but it is a film about a future in which not a ton has changed.

Part of that was it wasn't like we had $80 million to make a new future. They were smart to only go 10 years, where things have changed slightly but we're essentially the same. There's a couple of minimal ways things have changed. I feel like entertainment has definitely been degraded to the point of people just watching other people suffer on television. Generally people in the film are stupider, which I think we can probably count on.



"An incredibly inspirational story – the best movie I've seen so far this year!"
– Alexandra Heilbron, TRIBUTE.CA

KEVIN COSTNER

Disney
McFARLAND

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A moving tale of small-town sports success

Biopic. Running coach who was the inspiration behind McFarland film remains humble despite Hollywood treatment

Jim and Cheryl White have seen the movie McFarland three times and teared up at every viewing, even though, as he says, "We knew what was going to happen."

The film, which stars Kevin Costner as the most successful Californian high school cross- country coach in history, is the story of White, his wife and their life and work in McFarland, Calif., an impoverished town transformed by sports.

The Texas native taught in McFarland for 40 years, establishing a cross-country running team that would win nine state championships and give the runners a glimpse of life outside their small town and nearby fields where many of them worked as migrant "pickers."

His success may have earned him a Hollywood biopic and a more permanent tribute in the form of a dedicated gazebo in the town square, but he sees his influence in more metaphysical terms. "To me, my legacy is in the hearts and minds of these boys I've taught," he says.

In person, White is a humble man who quietly commands respect. At a post-screening Q&A I hosted with him in Toronto, he earned a standing ovation before even saying a word. As the audience clapped he was genuinely moved, and with a quivering voice whispered to me to "take over for a second."

Earlier in the day, we discussed seeing his life played out on the big screen. "We just hoped they could portray our true feelings of love for the town, for the community. That came across real well. We also felt like they portrayed the true hardships these boys went through."

Hollywood did make some changes to White's story and one scene in particular irked him. When we first see White in the film, he's hurling a cleated shoe at the lippy captain of his Idaho school football team, opening the kid's cheek.

"That is dramatic licence," he says. "It bothered me for a while but I talked to Kevin Costner about it. I said, 'Kevin, can you give me your true feelings about the situation that happened in Idaho?' He said, 'I think, Jim, you're going to come across as the hero and not the villain because you're standing up for what's right.' I said, 'All right,' and I was satisfied with that."

White often uses the phrase "Well, that's Hollywood for you," when describing the making of the film and liberties taken with his life's story. But now the movie is finished, he says, "What was really fascinating to both of us was watching the screen and seeing them say, 'Mr. White would you come in here,' (or) 'Jim White this, and Cheryl White that.' We're sitting there looking at ourselves up there. It was kind of funny."

In Focus

RICHARD CROUSE

Carlos Pratts, left, and Kevin Costner appear in a scene from McFarland. RON PHILLIPS/DISNEY

In Review

Hot Tub Time Machine 2

McFarland

The DUFF

Wrecking Crew

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Amell relied on his wits to nab role in teen flick The DUFF

Casting. Flash star aced dreaded 'chemistry read' by dropping improv lines on prospective co-star

RICHARD CROUSE
scene@metronews.ca

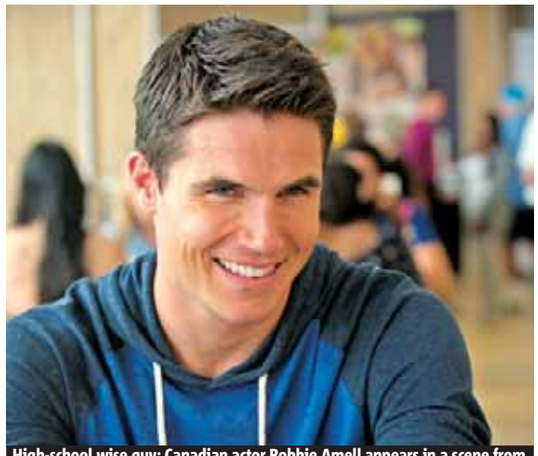
Canadian actor Robbie Amell's latest starring role was all about chemistry. To make sure he had the kind of spark needed to play opposite potential The DUFF co-star Mae Whitman, he not only had to audition, he then had to try out again at a "chemistry read."

"They narrowed it down to a few guys," says the youthful looking 27-year-old. "They had signed Mae and they brought us in one after the other. Before I went in, my best friend Nick, who's very funny, and I sat down and figured out some alternate lines. I thought I'd have a shot at this if I could make her laugh."

Preparation aside, he says for Whitman, fresh off a stint on Parenthood, it wasn't love at first sight. "Mae didn't want to drive in for the chemistry read," he says. "She was already sour and she said she was not excited. I walk in and she said, 'Screw this guy.' But I dropped some really rude improv line on her and she totally busted out laughing. I think that was the turning point."

Then it was a waiting game. "My chemistry read was at 11 on a Friday morning," he says, "which means there is nothing else I am thinking about for the next couple of days. It slowly started to disappear and it got to a point where I thought, 'If I'm the guy, great. If I'm not the guy, I'm not. I just want to know.'"

Two weeks later he had the part of Wes, the best-looking guy in Bianca's (Whitman) school, who informs her that she is a DUFF, the Designated Ugly Fat Friend. He tells her she is the gatekeeper; the approachable one boys befriend to get closer to her prettier friends.


High-school wise guy: Canadian actor Robbie Amell appears in a scene from The DUFF. GRANVILLE PICTURES

The all-important high school social hierarchy is the backbone of the story. Bianca and Wes are at opposite ends of the ecosystem, but Amell explains, "the movie is about knocking down these labels, embracing what makes you, you."

Lifetime achievement

Cardinal to receive award combining acting and activism

Tantoo Cardinal NADIA KWANDIBENS

As Métis actress Tantoo Cardinal prepares to receive a lifetime achievement award, she remembers what originally inspired her to begin acting more than 40 years ago: anger.

"It wasn't about a career at all — it was about having a voice," the Edmonton-raised 64-year-old said in a telephone interview this week. "I don't know if people really can appreciate what that experience is — of attempted genocide, generations and generations and generations where your language is outlawed, your creativity is outlawed, anything you think or say or do is actually outlawed.

"There was a fire inside," she continued. "I had a huge rage inside about the way my people were perceived and the injustice of that. I have to cling to conviction, because that's my gun, you know?"

On Friday, Cardinal will receive ACTRA Toronto's Award of Excellence, a career-spanning honour previously presented to Rick Mercer, Fiona Reid and Shirley Douglas.

The award simultaneously recognizes a body of work and commitment to advocacy, and for Cardinal there was rarely much of a distinction between the two.

Whether acting in such large-scale Hollywood productions as Dances with Wolves and Legends of the Fall or indies including Mothers&Daughters and Loyalties, Cardinal searched for roles that would expand the understanding of a culture she saw too often being demeaned in popular entertainment.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Uh-oh, those mean girls are after Kendall again

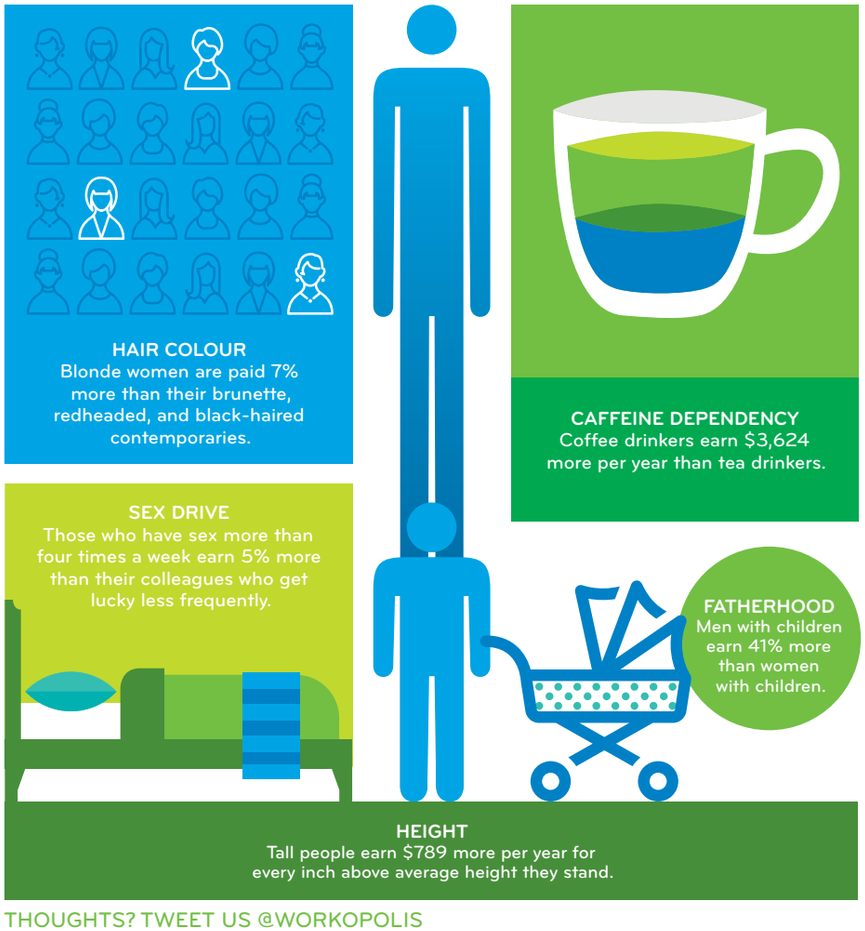
Kendall Jenner

Girls can be so cruel. Kendall Jenner is just trying to make a go of it as a model, working the New York Fashion Week runways for the likes of Marc Jacobs, Alexander Wang and Donna Karen, and the more established models just won't play nice.

Vogue Germany posted a backstage pic of Jenner on its Instagram feed, only to have models Lexi Boling and Binx Walton make with the snide comments. Boling started off with, "She's never looked better," followed by the old "crying laughter" emoji, to which Walton replied, "That's f--ed up," with the same snarky icon. The comments were quickly deleted, though, and Boling issued an apology, saying, "I wasn't thinking and made a silly comment."

Indeed.

HAVING LOTS OF SEX CAN MAKE YOU RICH.
NOW THERE'S A PICKUP LINE.
5 surprising traits of high-earning people.


HAIR COLOUR
Blonde women are paid 7% more than their brunette, redheaded, and black-haired contemporaries.
CAFFEINE DEPENDENCY
Coffee drinkers earn $3,624 more per year than tea drinkers.
SEX DRIVE
Those who have sex more than four times a week earn 5% more than their colleagues who get lucky less frequently.
FATHERHOOD
Men with children earn 41% more than women with children.
HEIGHT
Tall people earn $789 more per year for every inch above average height they stand.

THOUGHTS? TWEET US @WORKOPOLIS
For references, view the full article at workopolis.com

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Let's get to work

Gossip

NED EHRBAR

METRO'S TAKE ON THE WORLD OF CELEBRITIES

Iggy Azalea ALL PHOTOS: GETTY IMAGES

Iggy leaves trolls behind

Congratulations, Internet. You scared off Iggy Azalea. The Australian rapper returned from a little post-Grammys vacation only to be utterly dismayed by the social media reactions to some photos of her on the beach. So dismayed, in fact, that she went on an epic Twitter tirade culminating in her announcing she's taking her Twitter ball and going home because you're all jerks.

"Just got back from a great vacation, came online and saw apparently it's shocking and unheard of to be a woman and have cellulite," she wrote. "I feel the hatred and pettiness I see online at all times is making me become an angry person and I cannot be that. To become nasty because of the way I feel I am treated would be a disservice to my fans and I promise I will try to keep smiling. But I also want to let my fans know I am taking some time away from social media. I need to be happy and it is too negative and draining. My management will tweet/run my accounts from today onwards."

Not quite done, she popped back in a few minutes later to add the rather poetic, "The Internet is the ugliest reflection of mankind there is."

Dang, Iggy.

Psychic Fair
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Neill Blomkamp wins at social media, gets Alien sequel

How do you get a crack at reviving the long-running Alien franchise when the studio, Fox, initially passes on your pitch? For District 9 director Neill Blomkamp, the best course of action was apparently to just start posting your design ideas to Instagram.

He recently did just that, hinting that Fox wasn't interested, but fan reaction to the drawings was so strong that the studio changed its tune, officially tapping Blomkamp to add a new chapter to the space horror saga.

Nicely played.

Neill Blomkamp

Hugh really should shut up about ex Liz Hurley

Hugh Grant insists he and ex-girlfriend Elizabeth Hurley are on great terms, but that's probably not the case right this moment, as Grant was a little too candid about their breakup in an interview with Andy Cohen. "She's still my best friend. The sex bit probably fizzled out, but now she's my absolute best friend," Grant says. "The number one person I call in a crisis." But probably not this crisis, right?

Grant also revealed that he is not on such chummy terms with Notting Hill co-star Julia Roberts. "I've probably made too many jokes about the size of her mouth," he says. "She might hate me by now."

Elizabeth Hurley

Allison trusts her dad Brian Williams, so there

Actress Allison Williams is defending her dad, suspended NBC anchor Brian Williams, as a good man who cares deeply about integrity in journalism.

The Girls actress was asked by Seth Meyers how her family has been holding up since her father's career was put in jeopardy by questions about how truthful he is telling stories about his job and life.

"One thing this experience has not done is shake my trust and belief in him as a man," said Williams, who appeared with Meyers at the 92nd St. YMCA in New York. "He's a really good man, he's an honest man, he's a truthful man. He has so much integrity and cares so much about journalism."

NBC suspended Brian Williams for six months for telling a false story about being on a helicopter hit by an enemy grenade during the war in Iraq, and is looking into other claims he has made during interviews and appearances.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Allison Williams

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Dutch treats for everyone to enjoy

Amsterdam is an architectural wonder

Most people associate Amsterdam with Van Gogh, canals and coffeehouses. But the Dutch capital is an architectural wonder with much more on tap than the typical tourist spots. Often referred to as the Venice of the North, Amsterdam is connected by 1,281 bridges on 165 waterways. It's easy to get around, yet this urban village offers one of Europe's largest historical centres, with architecture dating back to Holland's Golden Age in the 17th century — and lots of winding streets to explore:

WHAT TO DO

The Dutch gave us Rembrandt, Vermeer and Van Gogh, so most tourists head to the Rijksmuseum, Van Gogh Museum or Anne Frank House. But Amsterdam is home to more than 50 museums, many of which are far less crowded than those in the Museum Quarter. Learn about Holland's role in the Second World War at the Jewish Historical Museum or discover why the Dutch are obsessed with tulips at the Tulip Museum. Photo buffs can take in rotating exhibits at the Foam Photography Museum, then pause at the café for a slice of huisgemaakte taarten (homemade cake).

The 800-year-old Oude Kerk (Old Church) is Amsterdam's oldest building, founded in 1213, which now serves as a concert hall and exhibition space. It hosts a busy concert schedule year-round underneath the largest medieval wooden vault (with some of the best acoustics) in Europe. The floor consists entirely of gravestones.

Avoid tacky souvenir stalls and hit De Negen Straatjes (Nine Streets) in the Central Canal Belt, a water-woven district of boutiques, cafés and restaurants. Wander the cobbled lanes for some of the city's best vintage finds alongside Europe's trendiest labels, such as Pina and Van Ravenstein. At night, avoid the rowdy bars of Leidseplein and Rembrandtplein and opt for a drink at one of the local haunts in Nine Streets, such as The Bar With No Name.

The 100-year-old Albert Cuyp open-air street market is a must for shoppers, with more than 300 vendors selling everything from cheese and chocolate to jewelry, clothing and bike accessories. Book lovers should check out the Spui Book Market (some English titles are available), and art lovers might find a one-of-a-kind memento at the Spui Art Market.

WHERE TO EAT

While other European capitals — such as Paris and Rome — are known for their culinary delights, Dutch fare tends to fall under the radar. But the Netherlands has its own culinary traditions, consisting mainly of hearty comfort food. Head to an eetcafé (similar to a French bistro) for lunch and a cup of Dutch coffee, or order a pint at a brown café, which specializes in beers and pub-style fare.

Go Dutch and try Hap-Hmm, an eetcafé near Vondelpark — Amsterdam's largest park, located in the Museum Quarter — and try the beef escalope. The Pantry serves up everyday fare from erwtensoep (split pea soup) to stamppotten (potatoes mashed with vegetables), as well as Indonesian satay.

The country's colonial past has resulted in an abundance of Indonesian restaurants — try the rijsttafel, a Dutch invention that combines various dishes from Indonesia. For those with a sweet tooth, Dutch bakeries offer classic pastries that typically include baked apples and berries.

Hipsters can head to Pllek on the banks of the IJ for organic food with plenty of vegetarian and raw options. This post-industrial space, with walls made of old shipping containers, is located on a man-made beach and offers everything from live music to yoga and massages — and lovely views across the canal. It's a 15-minute ferry ride to get there.

After hours, sample traditional Dutch liqueurs at a 17th-century tasting house, Wynand Fockink, which has been in business since 1679. Or head to Brouwerij 't IJ, a craft brewery located in a former bathhouse beside a Dutch windmill, where you can sip a pils or dubbel on the patio with a largely local crowd.

May to September is a great time to visit Amsterdam and explore its historical charms. Start planning your Dutch getaway today — you will be sure to discover your own hidden gems.

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Ricardo is a Canadian chef, television host and author on a mission: To unite people through the pleasure of food. Discover his delicious and simple recipes every Friday — just in time for the weekend

Bite into Academy Award luxury

This recipe makes approximately 24 appetizers. COURTESY RICARDOCUISINE.COM

Appetizers. Escargot and Garlic Stuffed Tomato Tarts are perfect for your glam party

RICARDO COOKS
Chef Ricardo
Ricardo Magazine

Hosting an Academy Awards screening party? Save the chips and dip for a less grandiose event. This super-chic soiree needs a healthy dose of luxe! Think escargot and, of course, plenty of bubbly.

When making these appetizers, make sure you prick the dough thoroughly, because the tomatoes can easily fall on the side while baking.

Simply place them back when arranging them on a serving platter.

1. With the rack in the middle position, preheat the oven to 400 F (200 C). Line a baking sheet with parchment paper.

2. On a lightly floured surface, roll out the dough to about 1/8 inch (3 mm) thick. With a 1 3/4-inch (4.5 cm) round cookie cutter, make enough circles to match your quantity of snails. With a fork, prick the centre of the dough several times. Place on the baking sheet and refrigerate.

3. Cut off the tomato caps, then cut off a thin slice at the base so they stand in place. Remove the flesh with a small melon baller. Set aside.

4. In a skillet, melt the butter with the garlic. Add the snails and cook for about 1 minute while stirring. Add the chives. Season with pepper. Stuff each tomato with a snail. Set aside.

5. In a bowl, combine the sour cream and mustard. Brush over each circle of dough. Top with the stuffed tomatoes. Drizzle with the remaining garlic butter. Bake until golden brown, about 20 minutes. Season with salt and pepper. Serve warm as an hors d'oeuvre.

FOLLOW RICARDO ON SOCIAL MEDIA AND ON RICARDOCUISINE.COM OR SUBSCRIBE TO HIS MAGAZINE'S ENGLISH EDITION, WHICH LAUNCHED IN 2014.

Ingredients

- 1/2 lb (225 g) thawed and cold puff pastry
- 24 cherry tomatoes
- 1/4 cup (57 g) butter
- 2 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 1 can (200 g) snails, rinsed and drained (about 24 snails)
- 1 tbsp chopped fresh chives or thyme leaves
- Salt and pepper
- 2 tbsp (30 ml) sour cream
- 1 1/2 tsp (7.5 ml) Dijon mustard

Liquid Assets

Tomato-wine challenge

LIQUID ASSETS
Peter Rockwell
@therealwineguy
liquidassets@eastlink.ca

Though it may be one of the most popular fruits in the world (and yes, technically it is a fruit) the affable tomato can be, in a word, challenging when it comes to a wine match.

When I first read Chef Ricardo's recipe for escargot and garlic stuffed tomato tarts, I couldn't help but feel a bit like Indiana Jones when he realized the temple was full of snakes in Raiders of the Lost Ark.

To paraphrase: Tomatoes. Why did it have to be tomatoes?

Not that they're impossible to partner with wine. It's just that their forward acidity and ripe, fruity juiciness can be an off-putting counterpoint to the vivacious personalities of many wines.

A foodie friend of mine adores a Sauvignon Blanc-based white with tomatoes. I lean towards an acid-forward red like an Italian Sangiovese.

While Italy's Chianti region in Tuscany is considered Sangiovese's true home, Farnese's 2013 Fantini Sangiovese IGT ($7.95 to $10.49), made in Abbruzo, is as soft on the palate as it is on the pocketbook.

PRICES REFLECT THE RANGE ACROSS THE COUNTRY. SOME PRODUCTS MAY NOT BE AVAILABLE IN ALL PROVINCES.

Keep it classy with Oysters au Gratin

1. With an oyster knife and a thick cloth, shuck the oysters and remove the meat from shells. Place the hollowed shells on a baking sheet covered with crumpled aluminum foil or coarse salt to stabilize the shells. Place the oysters in a sieve over a bowl. Keep the juices. Refrigerate, if needed.

2. In a saucepan, soften the onions in the butter. Sprinkle with the flour and cook for 1 minute, stirring constantly. Add the pastis and bring to a boil, stirring with a whisk. Add the cream, milk and reserved oyster juices. Bring to a boil. Add the spinach, arugula and parsley and cook, stirring constantly, until the greens have wilted. Season with salt and pepper.

Ingredients

- 30 oysters, scrubbed and washed
- 2 green onions, chopped
- 3 tbsp (42 g) butter
- 2 tbsp (18 g) unbleached all-purpose flour
- 1/4 cup (60 ml) pastis
- 3/4 cup (180 ml) 35% cream
- 1/4 cup (60 ml) milk
- 3 cups (90 g) spinach, chopped
- 2 1/2 cups (75 g) arugula, chopped
- 1/4 cup (11 g) chopped parsley
- Salt and pepper
- 3 tbsp (20 g) grated Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese
- 2 tbsp bread crumbs

3. With the rack in the upper third position, preheat the oven's broiler.

4. In a bowl, combine the Parmesan and bread crumbs.

5. Fill each shell with the cream mixture and top with an oyster. Sprinkle with the Parmesan mixture.

6. Bake for about 4 minutes or until topping is lightly browned. Serve immediately.

RICARDO

This recipe makes six servings. COURTESY RICARDOCUISINE.COM

NBA

Raptors stand pat at trade deadline

Toronto Raptors GM Masai Ujiri made no deals on Thursday's NBA trade deadline in a "huge vote of confidence" for the players he has.

"Vote of confidence to our players, to our team, to coach (Dwane Casey), keep plugging away," Ujiri said. "We've made a commitment, trying to give this group a chance."

Ujiri did field calls Thursday — "There's always calls in the NBA; you just have to pick which ones you feel like you need to do."

But he wasn't close to making a deal, he said. The Raptors are 36-17 and second in the Eastern Conference, and Ujiri likes the makeup of his team.

Following the nine-day all-star break, the Raptors are back in action on Friday, when they play the East-leading Hawks in Atlanta.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Faces in different places

A flurry of trades were made before the 3 p.m. EST deadline Thursday. The following are just some of the reported players that were dealt and their new teams.

- Kevin Garnett, PF, Minnesota
- Goran Dragic, PG, Miami
- Arron Afflalo, SG, Portland
- Isaiah Thomas, PG, Boston
- Reggie Jackson, PG, Detroit
- Brandon Knight, PG, Phoenix
- Enes Kanter, C, Oklahoma City
- Michael Carter-Williams, PG, Milwaukee
- Tyler Ennis, PG, Milwaukee
- Thaddeus Young, PF, Brooklyn

'Everyone still has things to play for'

NHL. Trade deadline, free agency could provide motivation for some Maple Leafs

Daniel Winnik, who is set to become an unrestricted free agent this summer, leads the Leafs in even-strength points since Dec. 17. CLAUS ANDERSEN/GETTY IMAGES

Points in the standings are no longer motivation for the Toronto Maple Leafs, yet there remains plenty for the players to prove.

"Everyone still has things to play for in here," winger Joffrey Lupul said. "Young guys want to make an impression. There's other guys that would probably like to get moved to a contender."

With the NHL's March 2 trade deadline looming, the Leafs are open for business and buyers around the league are watching carefully. Forward Daniel Winnik, recently-acquired centre Olli Jokinen and defenceman Korbinian Holzer, all three set to be unrestricted free agents July 1, are the players most likely to be dealt by then.

"I think anyone knows on an expiring deal and they're a UFA, they're a candidate to be traded," Winnik said recently. "When you're on a one-year deal, I think you're being evaluated every game of the year."

Winnik actually leads the Leafs in even-strength points since Dec. 17 and could be highly sought-after by a team in need of someone who can play all three forward positions. But Winnik doesn't necessarily think he's showcasing himself for a trade as much as his next contract this summer.

Quoted

"I love it here. I've been here my whole career. Obviously I want to stay here as long as I can. If there was something else to happen, it's kind of hard to say right now where I'd want to be because this is the place I'd like to be."

Maple Leafs centre Tyler Bozak, who has a no-trade clause in his contract, said he hasn't considered his potential options

Interim coach Peter Horachek understands the mentality. But unlike Buffalo Sabres coach Ted Nolan, who told reporters last month that trade candidates should "make it happen" with their play, Horachek isn't encouraging it.

"I think internally it probably is a self-motivating factor," Horachek said last week. "That's normal. I'm certainly not going to, from a coach's standpoint, say, 'All you guys out there in your last year, you'd better play harder.' I expect them to play harder anyways."

David Booth, like Winnik on a one-year deal and trying to prove he deserves another contract, said it would be naive to think changes aren't coming to the Leafs. They are expected to continue through the deadline. THE CANADIAN PRESS

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TFC wades into sea of data looking for edge

MLS. Like so many big European teams before them, Toronto is delving deeper look at analytics

Toronto FC's hiring of a manager of analytics is part of a long-term project to see how such data can be best used at the MLS soccer club, says general manager Tim Bezbatchenko.

Villanova professor Bret Myers was a consultant last year but Toronto FC decided it needed a full-time staffer to help establish its analytics framework.

Devin Pleuler has jumped into that role. He's tasked with number-crunching, from on-field movements to working with others on the budget and medical/sports science.

"We just want to have more information," Bezbatchenko said.

The Guardian reported last March that all 20 clubs in the English Premier League, and many in lower divisions, employ data analysts to sift through information from GPS technology and sports data companies.

Manchester City alone had 11 such analysts, the newspaper said.

"There's more information available to coaches and GMs," said Bezbatchenko. "You need to collect it, organize it and then look at it and try to figure out patterns and new ways of looking at the game."

Pleuler, who graduated from Wentworth Institute of Technology in Boston with a computer science degree, previously worked as a New York-based statistician for Opta and wrote the Central Winger column for mlssoccer.com.

After graduating from Wentworth, where he was a goalkeeper on the soccer team, Pleuler worked at a data analytics and quantitative marketing company named Autotegrity in Cambridge, Mass., as a data scientist. He also served as an assistant soccer coach with MIT. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Argos still eyeing BMO Field

A deal for the CFL's Argonauts to play at Toronto FC's home, BMO Field, could be reached as early as this summer, team owner David Braley said Thursday.

- Braley, who met with MLSE chairman Larry Tanenbaum on Tuesday, said he thinks an agreement could be done in time for the start of the CFL season on June 25.

BMO Field's east stand is currently under construction. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Racism in Paris

Chelsea talks lifetime ban for subway incident

Chelsea has suspended three people from its Stamford Bridge stadium following an investigation into an incident in which a black man was blocked from boarding a Paris metro train by a group of Chelsea fans.

The London club said Thursday that "if it is deemed there is sufficient evidence of their involvement in the incident, the club will issue banning orders for life."

The Premier League leader says it has received "substantial information" following an appeal for witnesses of Tuesday's incident, which happened before the team's Champions League match against Paris Saint-Germain, which ended 1-1.

Rowdy fans chanted racist songs as they prevented the man from getting on the metro on two occasions.
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Europa League

"Jordan should have taken that penalty. Rules are rules. Mario's been a bit mischievous."

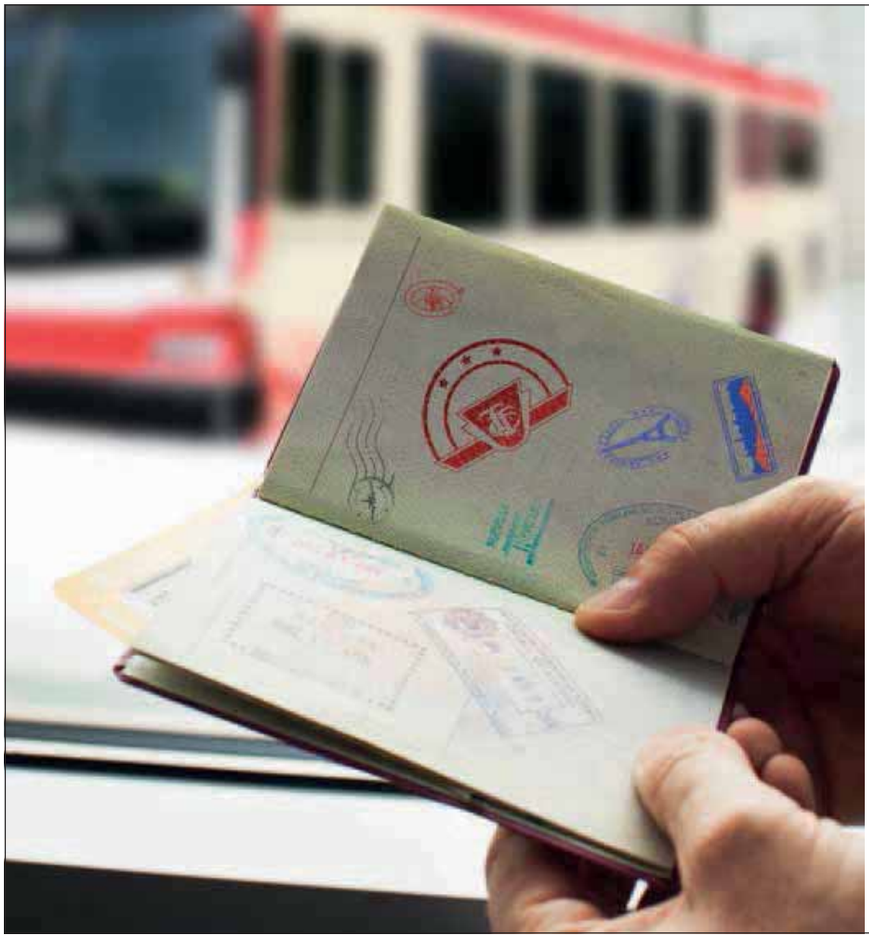
Liverpool captain Steven Gerrard. Mario Balotelli, pictured, took the ball from teammate Jordan Henderson as he was preparing to take an 85th-minute penalty kick, then scored the goal that gave Liverpool a 1-0 win over visiting Turkish side Besiktas on Thursday night in the first leg of the Europa League's second round.

Cross-country skiing

Canadian Harvey narrowly misses gold at worlds

Canada's Alex Harvey won the silver medal in the men's cross-country sprint Thursday at the Nordic skiing world championships.

Harvey, of St-Ferreol-les-Neiges, Que., was edged by Petter Northug in a photo finish when the Norwegian stretched out his ski for gold. THE CANADIAN PRESS



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Rams' rampage was 5 years in the making

Ryerson coach Roy Rana is currently leading the Rams to their most successful season in team history. RYERSON RAMS-WINSTON CHOW/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Basketball. Set to host Final 8 in March, Ryerson is fittingly embroiled in best regular season ever

When Roy Rana first met with Ryerson's men's basketball team some 5-1/2 years ago, he asked his players: What do you want?

To win a national championship, they told their new coach.

It was a tall order for a team that was mired in mediocrity. Ryerson was known for producing fashion designers and journalists, not basketball players.

But when the Rams host Queen's on Friday night at Mattamy Athletic Centre, it will cap the most successful regular season in Rams history, a remarkable turnaround that has seen them win 26 of their 29 games — they're 16-2 in league play — and remain firmly affixed in a best-ever position of third place in the Canadian university rankings.

Ryerson will host the CIS Final 8 on March 12 and 13, and Rana believes a national championship is within his players' grasp. But success, he said, won't be defined by a CIS title.

"This has been a hugely special season," Rana said. "And for us to evaluate and for us to appreciate the season based on one (national championship) game, it would be a huge disservice to all the work and all the fun times, and all the challenges we've had over ... for some of them, five years."

Quoted

"We dream about winning it all, but we'll appreciate much more than just that."

Ryerson coach Roy Rana

Jahmal Jones of Mississauga, Bjorn Michaelsen of Otterburn Park, Que., and Jordon Gauthier of Windsor, will be honoured Friday as Ryerson's graduating fifth-year players, part of Rana's original class of freshmen.

The Rams' record in the five years prior to Rana's arrival was a woeful 38-115. Jones, a six-foot guard averaging 17 points a game while enrolled in the business technology management program, hopes to play basketball professionally and then pursue a career in business.

It will be a bittersweet moment, he said, when the final buzzer blows on his career as a Ram.

"I don't think of it as sad, though," said Jones, "I think of it as a celebration."

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The following list of names and last known addresses, are people whose goods in storage at All Canadian Self-Storage 207 Weston Road, Toronto, ON., M6N 4Z3 will be put up for online auction on Saturday February 21st, 2015 at 11:00am due to non-payment of storage rent. The online auction will be conducted on YOUBIDLOCAL.COM

1) Michelle Harper	6 Legett Ave., TOR. ON. M9P 1X2
2) Lorraine Lowe	1-1270 Weston Road, TOR. ON. M6M 4R2
3) Barbara Wood	2001-2460 Weston Road, TOR. ON. M9N 3E4
4) Alex Moriera	153 Earlsdale Ave., 2nd Floor, TOR. ON. M6E 1L3
5) Breanna Williams	46 Stayner Ave., TOR. ON. M6B 1N6
6) Martha V. Simon	611 Oakwood Ave., TOR. ON. M6E 2X9
7) Nolan James	791 Military Trial, Scarborough, ON. M1E 4P6
8) Henrique Mateus	22 Marshlynn Ave., TOR. ON. M6L1J3
9) Henrique Mateus	22 Marshlynn Ave., TOR. ON. M6L 1J3
10) Victor Jara	15 La Rose Ave., Ap 1606, TOR. ON. M9P 1A7
11) Konstantin Anosov	1018-320 Assiniboine Road, TOR. ON. M3J 1C1

According to the Lease by and between the customers listed above and All Canadian Self-Storage and its related parties, assigns and affiliates in order to perfect the Lien on the goods contained in their storage units, the Manager has cut the lock on their unit(s). UPON A COURSORY INSPECTION, THE UNITS WERE FOUND TO CONTAIN: Household goods. Items will be sold or otherwise disposed of at this site on dates and at approximate times listed by the Addresses above to satisfy owner lien in accordance with the state statues. Terms of the sale are cash only. No checks will be accepted. All goods are sold in "as is" condition. Tax must be paid or resale numbers furnished. Buyers Must provide own lock if needed. Seller reserves the right to overbid. All items Or spaces may not be available on date of sale.

AUGMENTED REALITY

Stuck on 12 Across? Scan this image with your Metro News app for today's crossword and Sudoku answers. It's OK. No one's watching.

Horoscopes by Sally Brompton

♈ Aries
March 21 - April 20
As your ruler Mars moves into your sign today you will be in an assertive mood. Just be careful not to get too domineering for some people's tastes.

♉ Taurus
April 21 - May 21
If you can't get what you want over the next 24 hours you will get the chance to make up for it tomorrow. The only thing you have to fear is fear itself.

♊ Gemini
May 22 - June 21
You are so enthusiastic about something that you cannot understand why some people are being so negative about it. Maybe they have looked at the situation in a balanced way.

♋ Cancer
June 22 - July 23
You could easily lose patience with someone on the work front today, but hold back from saying anything too negative. They could make things tough for you later.

♌ Leo
July 24 - Aug. 23
You are in a helpful mood at the moment, but don't be too helpful. Do you want to end up doing so much for others that you have no time to do anything for yourself?

♍ Virgo
Aug. 24 - Sept. 23
A financial opportunity is worth pursuing but the planets warn it may not be as great as you've been led to believe. There will be a lot of work involved.

♎ Libra
Sept. 24 - Oct. 23
As Venus, planet of love, moves into the relationship area of your chart today it's likely you will meet someone who gets your pulse racing. Don't get carried away — yet.

♏ Scorpio
Oct. 24 - Nov. 22
Certain chores may be tiresome but there is no way you can get out of them so you might as well do the best possible job.

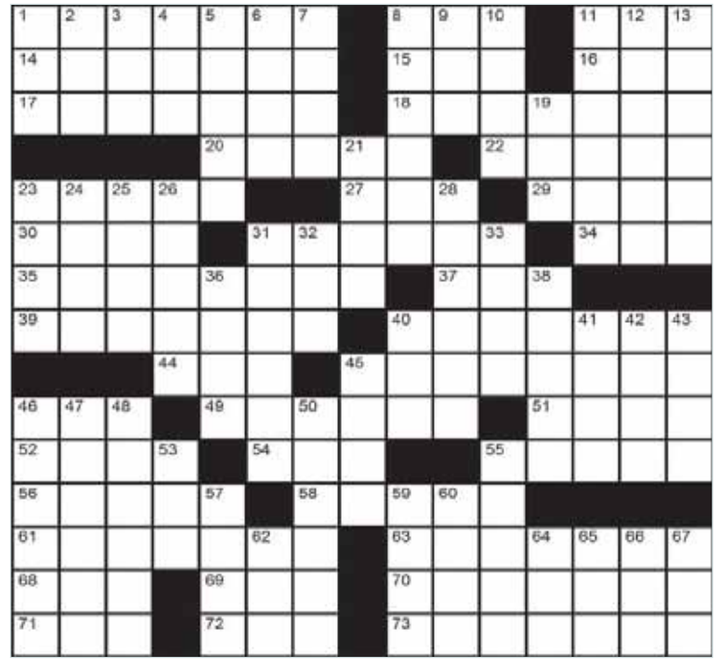
♐ Sagittarius
Nov. 23 - Dec. 21
Don't make any travel plans for today or tomorrow because there is something special coming your way and if you move you may miss it.

♑ Capricorn
Dec. 22 - Jan. 20
Mars in the domestic sector of your chart is likely to spark family squabbles but they are really not that important. Also, with Venus working in your favour you can calm things down. Be the voice of reason.

♒ Aquarius
Jan. 21 - Feb. 19
Social activities will be fun over the next few days but there will be challenges too. Someone you meet could rub you the wrong way over something trivial but it's really no big deal.

♓ Pisces
Feb. 20 - March 20
You may lose your cool about something that normally would not bother you. If you do, calm down and have the good grace to admit you went over the top.

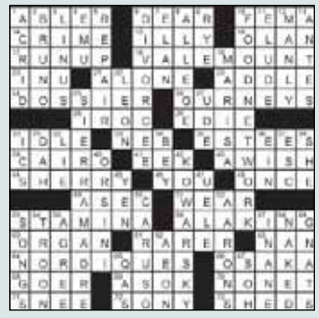
Crossword: Canada Across and Down by Kelly Ann Buchanan



Across
1. Oscars 2015: Dean __, Canadian director (with Bonnie Arnold) who is up for an Oscar for #50-Down at this weekend's ceremonies
8. __ for the cameras
11. Drink delicately
14. Ferocious fire
15. Fit Fiddle link: 2 wds.
16. __'easter
17. Conquers
18. TV Western on which #11-Down's director Clint Eastwood starred
20. Prefix to 'comedy'
22. Military caps
23. Domicile
27. Movie studio area
29. Quebec singer Mr. Simard
30. Uncommon
31. Health resort amenities
34. Soak flax
35. Keep from happening
37. New Zealand parrot
39. Take off with the cash
40. Super salty splashy spot: 2 wds.
44. "Won-der-ful!"
45. Oscars 2015: As per #1-Across and #70-Across... __ Feature Film
46. Inquire
49. 1971 Elton John album: '__ Across the Water'
51. Ski __
52. Red veggie
54. Three, in Italy
55. Exits-not
56. Country singer Mr. Jackson's
58. Mr. Agassi
61. Locale
63. Backslide
68. Rock producer Brian
69. Philosopher, __-tzu
70. Oscars 2015: As the co-director of "The Boxtrolls" (2014), Canadian cartoonist Graham __ is up for an Oscar in the category at #45-Across
71. __ Antonio
72. Barbie's boyfriend
73. Adieu!

Down
1. Fared
2. Mariner's dir.
3. Texter's pal
4. Liberace's nickname
5. Pontificate
6. Book's foreword [abbr.]
7. Baseball's Sammy
8. Oscars 2015: Best Actress nominee Ms. Cotillard
9. Can. neighbour
10. Look bewilderedly
11. Oscars 2015: Best Picture nominee, "American __" (2014)
12. Antiseptic
13. Adjust ahead of time
19. HRH part
21. Paste
23. Italian harp
24. Dig
25. Finds in mines
26. Record label
28. Absorb the knowledge: 2 wds.
31. Tropical vacation headgear
32. Supplement
33. Crease
36. Some soil
38. Go with the flow
40. CSI evidence
41. Athena's walkway
42. Like a Conger
43. Tangy quaffs
45. "Farewell, Father!"
46. Puts down
47. Ms. Gomez
48. Oscars 2015: Best Actor nominee, Michael __
50. Oscars 2015: "How To Train Your __ 2" (2014)
53. Blasting letters
55. Repetition mark, in music
57. Fancy fabric
59. Downer
60. Gambling mecca
62. Dundee denial
64. "Totally awesome"
65. Sort of tide
66. Knavish
67. Envision

Yesterday's Crossword



Online

See today's answers at metronews.ca/answers

Conceptis Sudoku by Dave Green

How to play
Fill in the grid, so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1-9. There is no math involved.

9		7		1		6	2	
					9			3
1				2	6			8
						1	4	
4		2		8		3		7
	7	9						
6			8	5				9
5			2					
	3	8		6		2		4

Yesterday's Sudoku

5	8	7	1	2	4	6	3	9
3	4	1	6	7	9	8	5	2
6	9	2	8	5	3	7	4	1
1	6	3	4	8	2	9	7	5
4	7	5	3	9	6	1	2	8
9	2	8	7	1	5	4	6	3
2	5	4	9	6	1	3	8	7
7	1	6	5	3	8	2	9	4
8	3	9	2	4	7	5	1	6

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